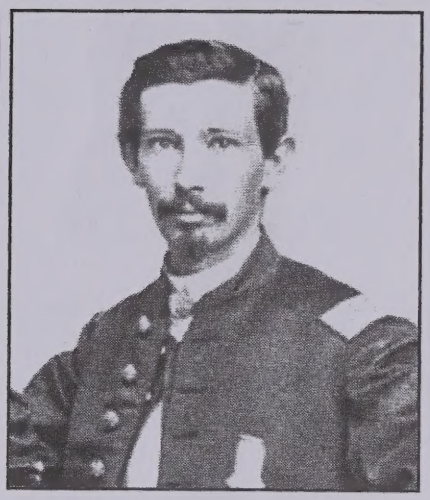
History of the 16th Connecticut Volunteers

By Blakeslee



Second Lieutenant
Bernard F. Blakeslee
Company G

Lieutenant Blakeslee, who survived two battle wounds and was captured at Plymouth, North Carolina, wrote the 16th Connecticut's official regimental history.

Connecticut State Archives

Photograph from the Book:

16th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry

Written By: Sergeant William H. Relyea

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HISTORY

OF THE

SIXTEENTH

CONNECTICUT VOLUNTEERS.

BY

B.F. BLAKESLEE,

LATE 2D LIEUT. CO. G. 16TH C.V.

HARTFORD:
THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD CO., PRINTERS.
1875.

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INTRODUCTION.

It is to be regretted that a complete history of the 16th Regiment, Connecticut Volunteers, has not been written. At this late day it would require much time, labor, and expense, to prepare one, and probably will never be done. Many volumes might be written which would be of inestimable value hereafter. Their services in the War for the Union cannot be placed upon a few pages. This volume is but a mere outline history, mostly compiled from diaries written by me at a young age, the importance of which was not then comprehended; with no expectation of the future use they would be put to,—but little was written, and that mostly concerned myself. It is the object of this work to create a permanent record of some of the marches, battles, and experiences generally of the organization above mentioned. This undertaking is made in behalf of the surviving members of the regiment, to whom it is hoped the work will prove of some value as a book of reference. The hope is also expressed that this work may prove a not unwelcome though sad memorial to the friends of those members of the regiment who lost their lives in battle or prison. The author is unaccustomed to historical composition, and makes no boast of literary education.

[5]

CHAPTER I.

ToC

1862.

CAMP WILLIAMS TO ANTIETAM.

The regiment was recruited in Hartford county, and its services were tendered to the National Government in response to the President's call for three hundred thousand volunteers for three years. It was almost entirely made up of men in the county, and of excellent material,—some of the oldest and best families were represented in its ranks; and comprised many of the finest young men whom the commonwealth ever sent to uphold its honor in the field.

It was organized during the month of August, 1862, under the command of Colonel Frank Beach, of the regular army. The month of August was a severe shock to most of the men, even those of a strong constitution. It was a complete revolution in their method of life. Many of the men were accustomed to all the refinements of wealth, and all of them had been reared in abundance. The outdoor life, though not hard as yet, was too great for those that had led the quiet and easy life of a citizen, and a few of our noble men who had offered themselves to the government were unable to endure the hardships, and died before the regiment left Hartford.

On Sunday, August 24th, 1862, the regiment, numbering ten hundred and ten men, was duly mustered into the United States service by Lieut. Watson Webb, of the regular army. [6]

On the 28th, the regiment having been fully clothed and equipped, (except muskets,) as army regulations required, they were carefully reviewed and inspected in the company streets by the Colonel. It was a very hot day, and many of the men fainted under their load. This experience taught a lesson; we then saw that it was impossible to carry such loads; many of the men having from thirty to fifty pounds packed in their knapsacks. Immediately after inspection the men unpacked and threw away a great many articles which at first seemed impossible to get along without; but even then we were too heavily loaded, as we found out the next day.

The forenoon of the following day was a busy time with the Sixteenth; bed-ticks were emptied, knapsacks packed, blankets rolled, and three days rations placed in the haversacks.

Early in the day the relatives and friends of the soldiers commenced to arrive from the country, and before the regiment left, the city was full of visitors. At noon tents were struck, and we were drawn up in line, a thousand strong. The march of the regiment through the city was a perfect ovation. The dock and river banks were thronged with dear friends whom ties had bound together for years. The Governor and a portion of his staff marched at the head of the regiment. Six companies embarked on the "City of Hartford," and four companies on the "Geo. C. Collins," leaving the dock at three o'clock, amid the cheers of thousands of spectators. A pleasant sail down the river, passing the night as best we could on crowded boats, we reached New York in good season the next morning. We were here transferred to the steamer "Kill von Kull," and a breakfast of vegetable soup and coffee was dealt out. The steamer took us to Elizabeth, N.J., where we went aboard cars and proceeded to Baltimore via Harrisburg, arriving at Baltimore the next day at nine o'clock. There the "Union Relief Association," gave us a most excellent breakfast. While we were waiting there in the depot for a fresh train for Washington, the report was received that Stonewall Jackson had been captured. We cheered and shouted, laughed and danced, rejoiced and gave thanks in the same breath, and did every thing except to keep still. [7]

We have never forgiven ourselves for that day's folly, and never shall. Stonewall Jackson had not been captured, as we had good reason to understand two weeks afterward.

In the afternoon we went aboard a miserable, dirty train and proceeded to Washington, arriving there late in the evening in a drizzling rain. We went into barracks for the night. Early in the morning the men visited the Capitol and other places of interest. At nine o'clock the regiment fell into line and for the first time we

were "on the march." Passing through the city we made direct for Long Bridge, where we had a long rest; while resting General McClellan came across from the Virginia side. In crossing Long Bridge we received a startling illustration of war,—meeting a line of ambulances a mile in length, bringing dead and dying from the battlefield of second Bull Run. The regiment marched to Fort Ward, a distance of five or six miles [8] from Washington. That night it rained terribly, and the tents not having come up, we were compelled to sit in the rain all night; this we thought soldiering with a vengeance. The next day was spent in drying our blankets and clothing in the sun. During the week we had little or no drill, and but few instructions in marching. On Saturday we received orders to be ready to march in light marching order. The next morning (Sunday, Sept. 7th,) we had the regular army Sunday Inspection with arms. At noon we took up our line of march, and went directly back to Washington, arriving there at sunset; this was a terrible march for us, being very hot and so dusty that we could barely see the second file ahead. Halting in Seventh street, we had a long rest where we ate supper, filled canteens, and flirted with girls in the windows. Resuming the march we started to join the Army of the Potomac, which was several miles beyond, and heading towards Frederick City, Maryland. At nine and a half P.M. we halted for the night, having made nineteen miles since one P.M. This was good marching for new troops, and showed what we would be equal to when necessity required. The regiment encamped for the night in the woods, but when we came to lie down on the ground with little or no covering it seemed rather tough. Having been ordered to move in light marching order, we left our knapsacks in Virginia, and therefore the men had only a blanket or an overcoat, whichever in their judgment would be the most useful. The next morning at an early hour we proceeded to Leesboro, a distance of three miles, and a report being among the men that we were [9] out of rations, Colonel Beach refused to go further until we had some. The men commenced to forage on a small scale.

September 9th the Baltimore papers gave us the startling news that the rebels had occupied Frederick City, and were invading Pennsylvania. During the day some shelter-tents were issued, which were gladly welcomed, as we had lain on the ground without any shelter for eight nights. On the evening of the 10th some rations came, and the cooks went to work and cooked during the night three days rations. In the meantime the men lived on the farmers near by.

The next day we started "on the march" at seven and a half A.M., marching steadily until three P.M., when we halted, being about a mile and a half from Brookville, and having made fourteen miles.

September 12th we commenced marching at seven A.M. and marched to Mount Lebanon, a distance of fourteen miles. It was an extremely hot day.

Saturday, September 13th, we learned that General Burnside had driven the rebels out of Frederick City; commenced marching at eight A.M. We passed through Damascus, Monrovia, and New Market, and encamped just outside of the town, and near New Market street. We heard the booming of artillery ahead all day. The next morning (Sunday the 14th) we broke up camp in a hurry, and marched rapidly towards Frederick City, reaching there at noon. Just before entering the city we passed quite a large squad of rebel prisoners. These were the first rebels that we had seen, and they attracted considerable attention from us. We encamped in a small vacant lot [10] on the east side of the city, and during the afternoon most of the regiment were around

the city without leave, hunting up something to eat, most of whom got good square meals from the citizens at a cheap price, averaging twenty-five cents per man. The rebels had been driven out of the city by General Burnside only twelve hours before, and the union citizens were in high spirits; nearly every house had the red, white, and blue in some shape thrown to the breeze to testify to its loyalty to the United States.

Monday, September 15th. The regiment commenced to march quite early in the morning, and passed through Fairfield and Middletown. We could here begin to form some idea of that great army, the "Army of the Potomac," and the fearful destruction that an army can make. The road was completely blocked up with army wagons and ambulances. The road was narrow over the mountain, and terribly dusty. The ambulances were filled with the wounded, and rebel prisoners under guard were trying to go to the rear. Infantry, baggage wagons, provision and ammunition trains, were eagerly pushing to the front. The result was a stand-still for over an hour. On both sides of the road, shot and shell had pierced the trees and houses. The fences were riddled with bullets, telegraph poles were down, and the earth was ploughed by solid shot. The dead lay by the road-side, and the ambulances were scouring the mountain sides with men detailed to pick up the wounded. The churches, houses, and barns were filled with the wounded. Parties were seen in every direction burying the dead. The scenes showed that a fierce battle had been fought the day before, and we began to realize what we must go through when we should join the main army. We marched that day about twelve miles, and encamped for the night on the battle-field of South Mountain. The next day we started on the march at six A.M. and passed through Boonsboro, and Keedysville. At Boonsboro, also, the churches, houses, and barns were filled with wounded. At Keedysville, we had a long rest, and it was here that we first saw a "line of battle." Colonel Beach, with his experienced eye, first spied the distant jets of white smoke. All were watching the peculiar puffs of smoke with great interest, when Adjutant Burnham, who had been absent, returned with the order that we were *wanted at the front*. This took us a little by surprise as we did not expect to go into battle so soon. But on went the bundles, and after a tedious march through ploughed fields and forests, passing brigades and divisions, the booming of artillery and bursting of shells sounding louder and louder, we finally joined a brigade consisting of the 4th R.I., and the 8th and 11th C.V. [11]

After resting awhile we loaded our muskets for the first time, and marched over a hill, and into a meadow which lay between two hills. While getting into this position we could plainly see the rebel gunners load and fire, some of the shells coming quite near us. At last we were in the great "line of battle" of the "Army of the Potomac," 2d Brigade, 3d Division, 9th Corps, General Burnside, on its extreme left. It was now eight o'clock in the evening, and quite dark; we were within a few rods of the enemy, and orders were given in a whisper; we were ordered to make no noise and to rest on our arms; for thirty minutes the utmost quiet prevailed. A musket was accidentally discharged; in a second the troops were on their feet, with arms at a "ready," and as they stood peering into the darkness ahead you could hear both lines of battle spring to arms for miles. [12]

Occasionally the boom of artillery was heard, and during the night there were repeated alarms, so that the soldiers on either side obtained but little rest. The hostile pickets on one portion of the line were so near each other, that during the night six of the enemy were captured.

General Rodman could march his column over. At about nine o'clock the Sixteenth again formed and marched about a mile, first through a corn-field, and finally into a valley where they halted in an orchard. While passing through the cornfield the men stripped themselves of blankets, overcoats, and all luggage that would impede the [15] progress of marching or the use of firearms. After filling our canteens from a brook near by, we marched up a steep hill that seemed almost impossible to surmount, then down on the other side and into Antietam river, which we forded and marched to a side hill. Soon in plain sight could be seen a rebel battery dashing intrepidly forward and planting itself directly in range of the Sixteenth.

By this time the rebel batteries were all roaring. They opened on us in all their fury. The air was filled with bullets and fiendish missiles. Hundreds of cannon were now aimed at us; grape and cannister, marbles and railroad iron were showered down like rain. The crest of the hill was a great protection to the Sixteenth, and only about a dozen were disabled. A battery was ordered up to engage the enemy, but it was whirled back in less than five minutes, losing every officer, seven men, and five horses. To see those men stand there and be shot down till they received orders to retire was a fearful sight. It was half past three o'clock; the Fourth Rhode Island and the Sixteenth Connecticut were ordered into a cornfield, and they moved forward quite a distance in advance of the army at their right; we here laid down letting the shot and shell pass over us.

In the meanwhile the Division of A.P. Hill, which had arrived from Harper's Ferry, and joined Lee's army, were coming into this cornfield from the opposite side, unobserved; at the same time Company H, (Captain Barber,) had been thrown out in advance as a vidette to prevent being surprised. At four o'clock McClellan sent orders [16] to Burnside to advance, and carry the batteries in his front at all hazards and at any cost. Burnside's corps was charging. General Rodman observed that the rebels were about to flank us and get in our rear, and ordered the Fourth Rhode Island, and Sixteenth Connecticut to swing to the left that we might face them, but at that particular moment the rustling of cornstalks warned us that the rebels were on us. Colonel Beach gave the order 'Attention!' While this order was being executed a terrible volley was fired into us. Volley after volley in quick succession was hurled into our midst. The Sixteenth sprang up and returned the fire with good effect; some fixed bayonets, advanced, and were captured. The most helpless confusion ensued. Our men fell by scores on every side. Still our position was obstinately maintained, until ordered to fall back. The rebels discovered the disorder, and came on us in heavy column.

While we were falling back to cover near the bridge we were swept by a destructive cross-fire, and the rebels becoming entangled in this cross-fire extricated themselves and fell back to the stone wall. The Eighth, Eleventh, and Sixteenth Connecticut, and the Fourth Rhode Island, re-formed and were placed in position for defence. At this time General Burnside's messenger rode up to McClellan. His message was, "I want troops and guns. If you do not send them I cannot hold my position for half an hour." McClellan said slowly: "Tell General Burnside that this is the battle of the war. He must hold his ground till dark at any cost. I will send him Miller's Battery; I can do no more. I have no infantry." Then as the messenger was riding away he called him back. [17] "Tell him if he cannot hold his ground, then the bridge, to the last man! always the bridge! If the bridge is lost, all is lost." The enemy was pressing down hard upon the battery which had been placed on the crest in front of the Eleventh. Burnside called

for aid and General Rodman having been killed, Colonel Harland took command of the division, re-formed the disorganized regiments, and by his bravery the unsupported battery was rescued from capture.

The fighting was ended. It was indeed a fearful day for the Sixteenth. Without having time allowed to learn even the rudiments of military science, it was hurried forward and was formed in regimental line almost for the first time on the battle-field of Antietam, the bloodiest day America ever saw. After sunset the brigade was relieved, and retired across the river to reorganize and be ready for the duties which they might be called upon to do when another day should come. Arms were stacked, and the tired soldiers laid down to rest. Of all gloomy nights, this was the saddest we ever experienced. All was quiet and silent as the grave. The stacks of straw which the rebels had fired burned slow and dimly. The cries and groans of the wounded that lay on the battle-field could be heard distinctly, and the occasional report of artillery sounded solemn and death-like.

The morning of the 18th dawned. The sun rose obscurely and there was a fair prospect of rain. The Sixteenth had gone into the battle with 940 men. Some not being able to endure the hard marching had been left at Frederick City. On this morning we [18]
could muster but 300 men; but during the day about 200 joined the regiment who wore unable to find it the previous evening. It was a sorry sight that morning as General Burnside rode up to encourage the men, who supposed, of course, that the battle would be resumed, said, "only hold out this day, boys, and the war is ended." Colonel Harland's brigade was once more moved forward, and stationed in line of battle near the bridge, which General Burnside had been ordered to hold at all hazards. Here they remained until the next morning, when the bridge was crossed, and the Sixteenth detached from the brigade to bury their dead, and care for the wounded who were still lying upon the field. The casualties in the Sixteenth were as follows: Lieut. Col. F.W. Cheney wounded in the arm, Maj. Geo. A. Washburn wounded severely in the groin, Captains Manross, Drake, and Brown instantly killed, Captain Barber mortally wounded, dying; about fifteen hours after, Captains Babcock and Hayden wounded, Lieut. William Horton killed, and four lieutenants wounded.

Thirty-eight enlisted men were killed outright. A great many of the men were mortally wounded and died within twenty-four hours after the battle, so that on the 19th, two days after the battle, when the regiment was detailed to bury the dead and pick up the wounded, the recapitulation stood as follows: Killed, 4 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 51 enlisted men; wounded, 2 field officers, 2 captains, 4 lieutenants, and 176 enlisted men; captured, 12 enlisted men and 180 missing, making a total loss of 432 men. For forty-eight hours men were brought in. Parties scoured the fields [19]
hunting for the wounded. Many had crept out of the storm of battle and hidden under fences, or among rocks, or in thickets, and their strength failing, they could neither come forth, or make known their situation. Some of the badly wounded did not have any attention for several days. All houses and barns were converted into hospitals, and yards and fields were strewn with straw and the wounded laid, there without shelter. Surgeons worked hard day and night, taking rest only when unable to stand up from weariness. At one of these hospitals about 25 of the Sixteenth were placed. Nothing was to be heard but cries, groans, and entreaties. Here Captain Barber lay in about the center of a barn, quiet, happy, and contented with his lot. The wounded lay around him on every side. He said that he could not live long, and spoke encouraging words to all. Gilbert B. Foster, of Co. A, who died November 13th, was also here. In a room

Check out the burial (40 men) vs

54 men killed on pg 8 w/ newspaper

article about the burial.

"Under a large tree near the stone wall,

where the hardest of the battle was fought."

(over)

Was there a wall in front of the
Ott Farm House at the time of the
Civil War?

about 12×20 a bloody table stood and around it were five surgeons. A wounded man was laid on the table and it took but a few seconds for them to decide what to do, and but a few minutes to do it. The amputated limbs were thrown out of a window. In forty-eight hours there were as many as two cart loads of amputated legs, feet, arms, and hands in the pile. Plenty of men, most of them slightly wounded, were hard at work carrying the wounded to and fro, making beds of straw, hauling and cutting wood, cooking, feeding, and assisting in a thousand ways.

(On the afternoon of the 18th, a heavy shower, lasting an hour, made it very uncomfortable for those not sheltered.) [20]

"Captain Drake was the most gentlemanly man in the regiment," said Surgeon Mayer. "He was the very soul of courtesy and unaffected dignity of deportment. He always had a quiet care for his men, when they were sick, and was a marked favorite with them, as well as with comrades in the line."

"Capt. Barber was especially noticeable for his religious character, earnest convictions, and high regard for duty. His patriotism was of sterling mould, and he was a brave and intelligent officer."

"Captain N.S. Manross, of Bristol, was a man of learning and varied accomplishments. He graduated at Yale in the class of 1850. In 1861, Dr. Manross accepted the position of Professor of Chemistry and Botany in Amherst College, where he was very popular and successful. Previous to this he had been to Europe, attended German lectures, and took the degree of doctor of philosophy. He invented a machine for the cutting of crystals from calc-spar. During vacation, he returned to Bristol, Conn., where he made a patriotic speech to his fellow-citizens, and consented to lead them to the field. Said he to his wife, "You can better afford to have a country without a husband than a husband without a country." His men loved him. While the regiment was in the cornfield and the baffle was raging the fiercest, a cannon-ball struck Captain Manross in the side and passed under his arm. A friend bending over him heard him murmuring, "Oh, my poor wife, my poor wife!"

Prof. James D. Dana said of him, "His death is a great loss to the scientific world." [21] Prof. B. Silliman, Jr., says "As an explorer, Dr. Manross possessed remarkable qualifications. To a rugged constitution and great powers of endurance, he united great coolness, quiet but undaunted demeanor, the courage of a hero, and unyielding perseverance. Had he lived—but what need is there of conjecture now? The world will never know its loss, but his friends will never forget theirs."[1]

On the 19th, the Sixteenth were employed in gathering up the dead and wounded. This was a very unpleasant duty, making many of the men sick. Forty of the men were buried that afternoon side by side, under a large tree, near the stonewall, where the hardest of the battle was fought.

BELINDA SPRINGS, ANTIETAM IRON WORKS, AND PLEASANT VALLEY.

The following day the regiment rejoined their brigade at Belinda Springs, a distance of two miles, and moved thence to Antietam Iron Works on the 26th. Here sickness

BELINDA SPRINGS, ANTIETAM IRON WORKS, AND PLEASANT VALLEY.

The following day the regiment rejoined their brigade at Belinda Springs, a distance of two miles, and moved thence to Antietam Iron Works on the 26th. Here sickness prevailed to a great extent, and but few men could be reported for duty. On the afternoon of September 23d, Messrs. E.N. Kellogg, J.M.B. McNary and W.H.D. Callender, of Hartford, Conn., came into camp. Crowds gathered around them, anxious to learn the news from home, and to send letters and messages. It seems that at 10 P.M., Saturday, Sept. 20th, a dispatch was received at Hartford, that the Sixteenth had suffered severely and that Lieut. [22] Col. Cheney was killed. It was thought best that these gentlemen should proceed to the battle-field, and carry out such arrangements for the care of the dead and wounded as they thought best; they accordingly left Hartford on the midnight train, reaching the regiment as stated above. By this time the dead were all buried, and most of the wounded had been taken to various hospitals. Lieut. Col. Cheney and Major Washburn were at this time at Boonsboro.

On October 3d, the entire army was reviewed by President Lincoln. The Vice-President and several Congressmen were present. On October 7th, the regiment marched over the mountain into Pleasant Valley, a distance of about six miles. This march, though short, was a very hard one; the path being very narrow, only admitting one at a time in some places, and so steep and rocky that it was very hard to surmount with our heavy loads. At the top of the mountain the troops halted an hour for rest. Here we had an extended view of the surrounding country. We could see a great distance, and the scenery was magnificent. At the camp in Pleasant Valley the regiment suffered severely from sickness, and when the army again took up its line of march, they could muster but few effective men. At this place a large number of promotions and appointments were made to fill vacancies.

MARCH TO FALMOUTH.

On October 28th we struck tents at 8 A.M. and after "falling in" we were once more "on the march." We passed through Knoxville and Berlin. At Berlin we crossed the Potomac [23] on a pontoon bridge. Once more we trod the "sacred soil" of Virginia. Passing through Lovettsville, we halted at 2 P.M. and encamped about a mile from the village. On October 30th reveille was sounded at 3 A.M. By the time the men had struck tents and packed up, the cooks had plenty of hot coffee ready, which is the soldier's breakfast, and at sunrise we were again *on the march*. We passed through a village called Burlington and encamped at 11 A.M. near Wheatland. Saturday, November 1st, there was heavy firing in front during the afternoon. Orders were given to be ready to march at a moment's notice. The next day we began to march at 9 A.M. with five days rations. We passed through Princeville and Goose Creek. The heavy firing in front continued. We halted at 7 P.M. and went into camp. The next day we marched during the afternoon, passing through Union. Artillery firing was heard ahead. On November 5th we struck tents and were on the march at 8 A.M. At 2 P.M. the entire army was drawn up in line of battle about a mile beyond Rectorsville, the artillery doing the fighting. After resting on our arms all night we commenced to march at 8 A.M., making fifteen miles during the day. We were following the enemy up closely. November 7th was a tedious and rough day. Snow fell most of the day, and at least one-third of the regiment were without shoes. We marched to a place called Waterloo, within five miles of Warrenton. Colonel Beach, being absent sick, Lieut. Col. Cheney and Maj. Washburn wounded, Capt. Mix was in command. On the 9th of November some Rebel cavalry broke through our lines and were making a raid around the army. Coming very [24] near us at 4 P.M. the long roll beat and without packing up and hardly having time to put on

our equipments, we double-quicked up the mountain and took position in ambush, where we staid till the morning of the 11th, when we returned to the old camp.

For several days rations had been very scarce, hard crackers sellin five cents each. Rations of pork, beans, and potatoes finally came on t day some hard bread, which was very wormy. Rations not being p foraging, and obtained large quantities of honey. One man who Quartermaster's Department, who always had considerable *lip*, was s get two water-pails full. While eating some in the night he was stung b morning he had about four inches of *lip*, which was rather more tha have before.

On November 15th, we commenced to march at eight o'clock in marching about three hours, we suddenly halted on the Warrenton tur Springs. Here the cavalry and light batteries had a little set-to with the rebels got worsted and retreated, leaving two wagons loaded with mus on fire. After filing to the left through the woods, and into a hollow nea up into line of battle for the night.

On Sunday, November 16th, we marched twenty miles, passing th Liberty. The next day we marched from noon till eight in the evening, p Run. On November 18th, the reveille was sounded at three A.M. We marched from six A.M. till five P.M., making a very long and hard march, and many of the men fell out from exhaustion.

On November 19th, the reveille sounded at five A.M., and at eight o'clock we were once more on the march. A hard rain-storm which had set in the night before made the road in this region from three to eight inches deep with mud. During the march we forded four streams, knee deep. We passed through Spottsville and Falmouth.

FALMOUTH, CAMP STARVATION.

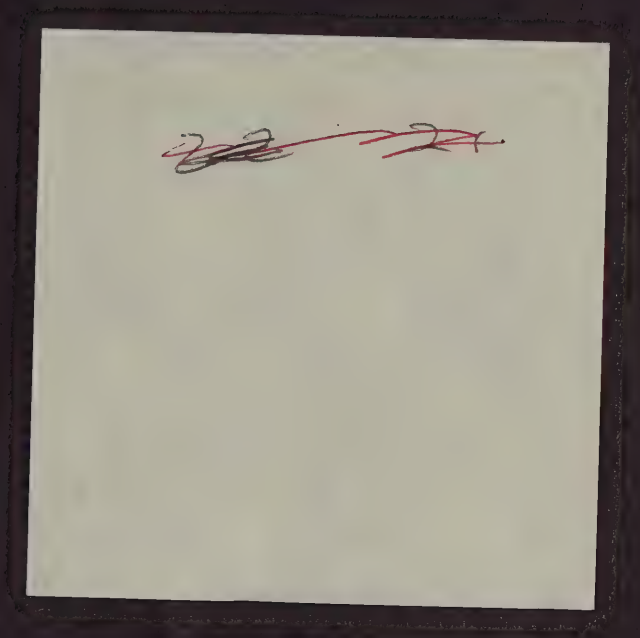
We encamped opposite the city of Fredericksburg, at half past two in a drenching rain, having made a hundred and seventy-five miles in twelve days. The field where the regiment encamped was very even ground, and the water stood on it from half an inch to two inches deep. The mud was about four inches deep. The men were completely exhausted from scanty rations, and foot-sore from long marches. The rain coming down in torrents, the soldiers were wet through to the skin. Fires could not be built, and tents could not be raised. Little or no sleep did the troops get that night. The next day was very cold, and it was still raining. The batteries opened on the city for about two hours in the morning.

On November 21st, the sun once more showed itself after a long absence, and the men were enabled to dry their clothes, build fires, cook and eat salt junk, pour down hot coffee, and once more felt in good spirits.

On the 26th, General Sumner reviewed the entire corps. [26]

On December 3d, Arthur D.N. Talcott, of Company "A," died in camp, and was buried at sundown.

When the regiment left camp near Fairfax Seminary on the 7th of September, they left their knapsacks with contents under charge of a guard. A few days after they were sent to Washington, and there stored. These were returned to us on the 3d of December. They were very welcome at this time, the weather now being very cold. The snow was three inches deep, and there was plenty of ice. For nearly three months a number of the men had



our equipments, we double-quicked up the mountain and took position in ambush, where we staid till the morning of the 11th, when we returned to the old camp.

For several days rations had been very scarce, hard crackers selling as high as twenty-five cents each. Rations of pork, beans, and potatoes finally came on the 11th, and the next day some hard bread, which was very wormy. Rations not being plenty, the men went foraging, and obtained large quantities of honey. One man who was detailed in the Quartermaster's Department, who always had considerable *lip*, was successful enough to get two water-pails full. While eating some in the night he was stung by a bee, and the next morning he had about four inches of *lip*, which was rather more than we had seen him have before.

On November 15th, we commenced to march at eight o'clock in the morning. After marching about three hours, we suddenly halted on the Warrenton turnpike, near Sulphur Springs. Here the cavalry and light batteries had a little set-to with the rebels, in which the rebels got worsted and retreated, leaving two wagons loaded with muskets, which they set on fire. After filing to the left through the woods, and into a hollow near the road, we drew up into line of battle for the night.

On Sunday, November 16th, we marched twenty miles, passing through the town of Liberty. The next day we marched from noon till eight in the evening, passing through Elk [25]
Run. On November 18th, the reveille was sounded at three A.M. We marched from six A.M. till five P.M., making a very long and hard march, and many of the men fell out from exhaustion.

On November 19th, the reveille sounded at five A.M., and at eight o'clock we were once more on the march. A hard rain-storm which had set in the night before made the road in this region from three to eight inches deep with mud. During the march we forded four streams, knee deep. We passed through Spottsville and Falmouth.

FALMOUTH, CAMP STARVATION.

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been without blankets. About this time Governor Morgan of New York sent us a taste of home. Each man had three apples, two onions, and half a pickle, and the smoking men had half a paper of tobacco each. These went down with a genuine relish. At this time Capt. Charles L. Upham, of the Eighth Connecticut Volunteers, was placed in command of the regiment.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Military and Civil History of Connecticut.

[27]

CHAPTER III.

ToC

1862.

BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG.

On Wednesday, December 10th, clothing was issued to the regiment. Shoes were very much needed. In the evening a pontoon train went down towards the river, but no unusual notice or remarks were made about it, and both officers and men went to sleep that night without suspecting in the least that early on the morrow a heavy battle would be raging. The next morning the troops were early aroused by the tremendous discharge of two mortars, and simultaneously the opening of our batteries of nearly two hundred pieces. Nearly the entire day the batteries poured incessantly their deadly fire of shot and shell into the city with terrible rapidity. During the afternoon the firing gradually ceased, and at sundown victory rested on our banners. During the day three days rations and sixty rounds of cartridges were issued to the men. Towards the evening the Sixteenth was ordered down to the river, but before reaching there the order was countermanded, and they returned to camp for the night. The next day (Friday,) the Sixteenth advanced to the river again early in the morning, and lay on the banks all day, watching the fighting on the other side of the stream. In the evening they crossed the pontoon bridge, and went into the city. After [28] stacking arms on Main street, most of the men went into houses to sleep. The effects of this short siege was awful to contemplate. Some portions of the city were completely battered down. Buildings in various parts of the city were burning, and during the night fresh fires were continually breaking out. Although the enemy had carried away most of their wounded and dead, still a few remained in the city. In a cellar was found by the Union troops, ten women and a child, all dead; they had gone there for protection from our shells, but one had struck there, and bursting, killed them all. While a member of the Sixteenth was searching for wood in the yard of a residence after dark, he stumbled over what he supposed to be soldiers asleep on the ground. Excusing himself he went on and after gathering an armful of wood, was returning when he stumbled over the same men again. Much to his disappointment they did not get up and damn him. Going into the house and getting a lighted brand, he came out and found that they were *three dead rebels* who had been killed and lay there side by side. One of them was an officer. An amusing incident occurred on this same evening in Company H. Sergeant Spencer was around the yard looking after boards to sleep on. Finding one that was some twelve or fourteen feet long, he laid one end of it on what he supposed to be a stone, and was about to jump on it to break it in the center, when a soldier who lay there wanted to know "what he was trying to do?" In the darkness of the night he had laid the board on a man's head. The next day we were drawn up in line of battle, but being on the reserve had nothing to do but witness the [29] contest raging in front, which was fearful. At dusk we moved to the front, where bullets came thick and fast until eight o'clock, when the firing ceased, and all was quiet during the night, except the howling of dogs, and the occasional discharge of artillery.

On Sunday morning, December 14th, we returned into the city, remaining there all day. The fighting continued hard in front. At sundown we again moved to the front, where we remained supporting a battery until the next night, when we returned to the city, crossed the river and marched to our old camp, being the last brigade to leave the city. Thus ended the battle without the Sixteenth being actively engaged with the enemy, and meeting with a loss of only one wounded and one missing. Drilling, inspections, grand reviews, picket duty, and frequent preparations for marching, constituted the chief occupation of the troops during the greater part of the winter months. The weather was extremely cold, quarters were poor, and constant exposure invited sickness and disease, and death creeping in boldly hurried away its defenceless victims with alarming rapidity. Many were discharged, and the ranks continued to decrease daily.

On December 24th, Lieutenant-Colonel Cheney, in consequence of the severity of his wound was compelled to resign, and two days after, Adjutant John H. Burnham was promoted to be Lieutenant Colonel, and took command, Colonel Beach being absent, sick. Colonel Burnham's promotion was the *making* of the regiment. Being a man of promptness, and full of energy, and above all a perfect soldier, Colonel Burnham infused a [30] new spirit into an organization which had been exhausted by arduous marches, a severe battle, and a weary campaign. It was about this time that another piece of good luck happened to the regiment, which was the appointment of Dr. Mayer, as Surgeon. He was a good physician, and as a surgeon could not be surpassed in the army of the Potomac. He commenced immediately to make improvements in and out of the hospital, and to look to the cleanliness of the tents, company streets, and the cooking utensils. He also saw that the food issued was properly prepared by the cooks; and when he gave cough syrup, it was not *stuff* that men would use on their food for molasses.

NEWPORT NEWS AND SUFFOLK.

On the 6th of February, 1863, our connection with the Army of the Potomac was dissolved. We were ordered to Newport News, where the regeneration of the regiment steadily progressed. At three o'clock in the morning the regiment was ordered to *pack up*, and be ready to march in two hours. It was pitch dark and raining terribly, with mud six inches deep. It was some little time before the men could get bon-fires burning, so that we could see to pack up. The men dressed, took what rations they could get, and fell into line after repeated orders, leaving most of the tents standing, they being wet and too heavy to carry. Marching to the depot, the mud was not only deep but extremely slippery, and nearly every man slipped down, and those that did not, were completely spattered over from head to foot, and were covered with mud and completely drenched through to the [31] skin by the rain, which was decidedly uncomfortable that cold morning. After shivering in the cold for two hours, we were allowed to get aboard the freight cars, and were taken to Acquia Creek. Here we went aboard the steamer John S. Brooks, as did also the 8th and 15th C.V. Most of the men had little or no water in their canteens, and all suffered terribly from thirst before we reached Newport News on the afternoon of the 8th. Whose fault this was I am unable to say, but it was a great piece of negligence to put troops aboard a vessel knowing that they were to remain there for over two days without seeing them provided with water. Newport News was a paradise by the side of Falmouth. There was no mud, rations were good, and the weather was beautiful. We were quartered in barracks, which made it very pleasant.

On landing, the first thing was a drink of water, and then two days rations of soft bread were issued to us, which, although being two loaves, was disposed of in less than two hours; the first one in something less than five minutes. Not having tasted any for over five months we appreciated it. The guard mounts, dress parades, and reviews at this place were

the grandest and most imposing ever witnessed in this country. About five weeks were spent in drilling, recruiting,& c., at the end of which time the 3d Division was ordered to Suffolk to strengthen the force at that point.

It was the early part of March and bitter cold when the regiment left Newport News and by boat went to Norfolk, where they went aboard a train consisting of platform cars with a [32] single baggage or passenger car in the rear for the officers. Everything being in readiness the train started and sped on its way to Suffolk, arriving there at midnight. The men jumped off the train and fell into line, when lo and behold only two officers were to be found. The car containing the officers had not been attached to the train. The two officers present had for some reason got upon the cars with their men, and therefore were with the regiment. But we had no orders, whether we were to go farther or stay there, and whom to report to we did not know. The train moved off, dark as a pocket, and some of the men nearly froze to death. Something had got to be done. After a little consultation, the two officers took command of the two wings respectively, and the First Sergeants the companies. The regiment moved off by the flank to cut their way through the darkness and encamp *somewhere*, until daylight. We first tumbled down a steep embankment, at least twelve feet, the men falling on all sides, then into a brook two feet deep and six feet wide, and finally brought up against a rail fence. Tearing this down we passed into a field and halted, not deeming it best to proceed farther. The men spread out in every direction in the darkness, each one bringing in what he could find in the shape of wood to build fires.

There was a house near by which we supposed to be vacant, and the men in the darkness had taken all the fence and wood, and had even pulled the clapboards from the house as high as they could be reached. When morning came, we found it to be an elegant wood [33] house painted white, and the owner thereof at first made quite a fuss, but when he found so many of the men nearly frozen to death, he concluded *it was all for his country*. It was on that night that the Quartermaster-Sergeant found that one of the men had bored a hole into a barrel of coffee, which he had mistaken for whiskey, and was shaking it up good, wondering why it would not run. Daylight finally came and we found that we were on the outskirts of the city and within sixty rods of the 112th N.Y. Vols., whose generous Colonel hearing the noise in the night, reconnoitered and finding that we were Union troops, ordered all his cooks up to make us hot coffee. Kettle after kettle of hot coffee all sweetened, was brought to us, which we drank in large quantities before getting thoroughly warmed through. This was a perfect godsend to us, and a more thoughtful action could not have been done by the Colonel. We fully appreciated it, as was shown by the fast friendship between the two regiments thereafter. Some half dozen of the men nearly died, by being chilled through, being several days before they were able to do duty. The officers arrived next morning on the regular train.

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[34]

CHAPTER IV.

ToC

1863.

SIEGE OF SUFFOLK.

During the siege of Suffolk the Sixteenth took an active part on the defensive side, and had the honor of two engagements with the enemy, in one sally losing one killed and seven wounded, and in a sort of half battle across the Nansemond river, two killed and eight wounded.

"But though we did not suffer much from the enemy, we did a good deal from General Peck. This fidgetty old man kept fortifying and re-fortifying until his soldiers had become regular mud-diggers, and he had spent no end of labor and money in constructing works of immense magnitude, to defend a position not worth holding. There was digging and basket-weaving to an extent that went far toward developing the talents of the soldiers for farm work, and there were orders enough issued to supply the greatest army on earth. It will not easily be forgotten that the Eighth, who had been especially affected by gabion manufacture, awoke one morning and, instead of the stars and stripes, found a large sheet floating from their flagstaff with the inscription: "Peck's Avengers, or the Basket-Makers of the Nansemond."[2]

[35] At four o'clock in the afternoon of April 11th, could be seen the pickets coming into town with a vengeance. Soon could be heard the long roll beating in the camps near General Peck's headquarters, and almost instantly the excited General himself came riding into camp at break-neck speed, the guard coming very near bayoneting his horse, ordering the regiment under arms immediately. Colonel Beach, who was in his tent, overhearing the order, came out and told the General "that he would frighten the *best* of troops, and that he (Beach) would not stir an *inch* until he received orders through the proper channels." As soon as the orders came properly we fell in and marched to our position at the breastworks. Two days after, the rebels made an attack directly opposite the Sixteenth on the Somerton Road, but were so handsomely repulsed by the artillery, that they soon retired. From that time until the siege was raised we had the usual amount of hard labor and constant watching night and day that attends a siege and constant exposure to the enemy's fire. On April 24th, under the command of General Corcoran, the 13th Indiana, and the 11th and 16th Connecticut regiments went out on the Edenton Road on a reconnoissance. After skirmishing with the enemy for about thirty minutes, the regiment charged, driving the rebels from their pits to their earth-works, which was, perhaps, fifty rods. After holding this line long enough for the artillery to have a good duel and the General to find out the strength of the rebels, we returned within our defenses.

[36] The regiment captured five prisoners, the officer of the pickets, a sword and various cooking utensils, which the rebels had left in their hurry. The casualties were one killed and seven wounded. This was a very successful skirmish and gave the men great confidence in themselves. Owing to swamps and the slashing on the edge of the woods, which the rebels had prepared, the men came into camp with their clothing completely ruined, making it necessary for an issue of clothing the next day.

On Sunday, May 3d, the regiment was ordered across the Nansemond river on the Providence Church Road, where they were engaged with the enemy several hours. The casualties were two killed and eight wounded. Privates H.W. Barber (A) and Frederick P. Cooley (H) were killed outright and Capt. Tennant, Serg't Pocket (D) and Corp'l Rivers (I) died from the effects of their wounds soon after, making really a loss of five killed. First

Serg't Blakeslee (A) seriously wounded in the head, (making the second time in the same place,) was examined by Col. Beach, Capt. Pasco, and other members of the regiment and pronounced dead and left on the field.

Chaplain Francis B. Butler, of the 25th N.J. Regiment, while picking up Serg't Blakeslee, was fatally shot by a sharpshooter and died a few hours after with prayer on his lips for the wounded who lay around him. Under good surgical treatment by Surgeon Mayer, Serg't Blakeslee was able to fight other battles. Capt. Tennant was wounded in the early part of the action, and was taken from the field on a rude litter; notwithstanding the pain caused by the wound, he was cheerful and smiling; and remarked that he was good for [37] a ten day's furlough. He was a brave young officer, and one of the best in the service. He was greatly beloved, and his early death brought sadness to many a brave heart. Young Barber's last words were "Tell mother that I never was a coward."

FOOTNOTES:

[2] Surgeon Mayor's Address. Re-union, 1867.

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[38]

CHAPTER V.

ToC

1863.

PORTSMOUTH, ON TO RICHMOND.

After the siege was raised, the regiment remained in Suffolk until the middle of June, when they removed to Portsmouth, and encamped about three miles from the city, on the western branch of the Elizabeth river. This camp was formerly occupied by the 22d Georgia (rebel) regiment. The site was in a splendid grove and being on the bank of the river, afforded a fine place for the men to bathe, row, sail, and catch fish and oysters. I recollect of no place where the regiment lived so well, and enjoyed themselves so much as there. We had been there but two days when we were ordered to build a fort; but after working on it two days, it was abandoned by an order to be ready to march in light marching order with three days rations the next morning. Every thing was made ready and the men retired as usual at nine o'clock. But at half-past eleven the long roll sounded, and after forming in line the regiment marched through the woods to Portsmouth, a distance of three miles, in pitch darkness, and embarked on a transport, which left at 3 A.M.

YORKTOWN, WHITE HOUSE LANDING.

At eleven o'clock we found ourselves at Yorktown, encamping on the grounds where many a soldier had fought. The works built by McClellan and even those of the [39] revolutionary war were still visible as was also the spot where the sword of Lord Cornwallis was surrendered by General O'Hara to General Lincoln, who was designated by Washington to receive it.

At half-past one on the morning of the 26th, the long roll beat again, and after falling in, the regiment marched to the wharf where they waited in the rain till 10 o'clock for a transport. At eleven all was ready, and after sailing up the Pamunkey river, which is one of the crookedest rivers in the country, as well as one of the finest and most picturesque, we disembarked at White House Landing.

Spier's cavalry had gone ahead of us one day and surprised the rebels, they barely having time to get aboard a train which stood in readiness to take them to Richmond. The cavalry then made a little raid through three counties, returning on the evening after the day of our arrival. They reported one severe fight and the capture of Brig. Gen. Wm. H.F. Lee, one Lieutenant-Colonel, one Surgeon, and one hundred prisoners. They also brought with them thirty-five wagons, besides burning eighty-five wagons and several railroad bridges. On the 28th, General Dix and Staff arrived and preparations were at once made for a move towards Richmond. Captain Pasco, of Company A, received his commission as Major on this day.

BLACKBERRY RAID.

On the morning of July 1st, the reveille sounded early and the division crossed the river, and after marching hard all day encamped for the night near King William's Court House. [40] The next morning we were aroused at three o'clock, and marched to Brandywine, a distance of eight miles. On July 3d the reveille sounded at three o'clock, but we did not commence to march till five, when we marched pretty steady until one o'clock. The entire army had to stop then on account of the heat. This was the hottest day of the summer, and between the hours of twelve and one, sixty-five men fell out of the Sixteenth, fifteen of them having received a severe sunstroke. Four out of our Brigade died almost instantly. At five in the afternoon, the division commenced to march again and did not halt till nine in the evening, making in all about twenty miles that day. The name of this place was Taylor's Ferry.

The next day being July 4th, was a legal holiday in times of peace, but was not so for this division. The 11th and 16th Connecticut regiments and a section of battery were left at this point to guard a bridge and the supply train. The rest of the army moved to Hanover Court House, where they had a rather tough time. After marching all day, they had to tear up three miles of railroad, cut telegraph wires and burn bridges, all under the fire of the enemy. This did a great deal of good, for Lee was in Pennsylvania, and finding his communication cut in the rear, retreated.

The next morning the Sixteenth was up at three, moved their position at five, and at eight the troops who had gone to Hanover Court House, returned. At noon three regiments were detailed to forage on the country and take all the beef, mules, horses, sheep and salt, [41] which they could find. At two o'clock a supply train from White House Landing arrived with two days rations. At eight in the evening, we found that the enemy were after us, and we started on the retreat. Contrabands followed us in large numbers. At ten the rebels were close on our heels, as we passed through Mongoheck. At three o'clock the next morning we had gained somewhat on the rebels and were allowed an hour's rest at the Town of

Ayletts. The men were so tired on this march, that they actually slept while marching, and when we halted at 3 o'clock that morning the men fell as if struck by lightning and were all sound asleep in two second's time. But our position was not safe, and the bugle sounded the reveille at four and after partaking of a scanty breakfast, we marched till half-past two in the afternoon, when we encamped about a mile this side of King William's Court House in a hard rain storm. This was certainly a hard fate for those who went to Hanover Court House, too fearful to be believed, making three days and two nights of hard labor with only one hour's rest. But it had to be done. Several who were unable to keep up and fell out were mercilessly shot dead by guerrillas who harassed the rear. A great many of the men provided themselves with horses, which they took out of barns by the road-side. The reveille as usual sounded at an early hour (three A.M.) the next morning and we marched to White House Landing, reaching there at eleven. The next day the division took up their line of march and marched to Hampton through a heavy rain storm and mud knee deep. [42] Thence by boat they proceeded to Portsmouth, reaching their old camps on the afternoon of the 14th.

This raid in history is called the "Blackberry Raid," there being no end of blackberries, of the most luscious kind. It was during this raid that a new Chaplain, (Charles Dixon, of the Eighth Conn. Vols.,) reported for duty. There seemed to be at first serious objections, both among the officers and men, to our having a chaplain, but they were soon dismissed; for he was one of those rare men whom all learned to love, and his bravery in battle and southern prisons won him a good name. On our return to Portsmouth, through a special order, a Regimental Band was organized, which grew to be a most excellent one, and added not a little to our military standing.

CAMP TENNANT.

July 15th, 16th, and 17th, was spent in fixing up our camp. But the 19th, 20th, and 21st was spent entirely in *trying* to have a review. The first day we marched two miles, stood in a broiling sun for two hours, and then returned to camp. The next day the same performance was gone through with and no reviewing officer came. Finally, on the last day, just as General Foster got within a few rods of us the rain came down in torrents, and continued till General Foster went away. The rain stopped at five, and as the men were all ready for the review it was agreed that the ceremony should be gone through with by Colonel Burnham acting as reviewing officer, and Major Pasco taking the command. From this time until the ninth of September there was but little to attract attention, except the [43] general routine of parades, picket and police duty. The regiment therefore had a little time of rest.

On the 30th of July, Colonel C.H. Prentice, J.G. Rathbun, J.A. Case, and J.S. Brooks, of Hartford, made a visit to the regiment. As nearly the entire regiment were acquainted with them, they were *very* welcome, and we presume they enjoyed their visit, especially the day that they visited the outposts, a distance of seven miles from camp, when one of those southern rain-storms came up, and they got a thorough soaking. This delayed their visit another day, in order to have their clothes dried. The quartermaster temporarily supplied them with brogans and clothes, but the amusing part of it was that Col. P. was so large and tall that the soldier's sizes could not be gotten only half on, and therefore with a cap and coat half on, and pants that reached a little below the knees, and with a huge pair of brogans, he looked so badly that he stayed in the Colonel's tent and played euchre all day and night. It was about this time that we had some terribly hot weather, the thermometer reaching 118° on August 2d, and 115° on August 3d. The pious members of the regiment went to work and built a chapel, which turned out to be a very fine edifice, and together with a temperance organization which started about this time, effected a great deal of

good. The chapel was dedicated with impressive ceremonies, and a church organization was formed, the fruits of which last even to this day. The surgeons ordered some hospitals built, which were also dedicated by a fine dance. The *morale* of the regiment at this time was about perfect, and I can not better write of it than in the words of Surgeon Nathan [44] Mayer, in his address to the regiment, at its reunion in 1867.

"Gradually the finest camp but one, which it has been my fortune to see, grew up. The most perfect order, the most civilized condition prevailed. The tents were neatly and prettily furnished, as our Connecticut country homes are, and the ground was always in beautiful condition. As winter approached the men built a hospital of logs, log-houses for the officers, log-kitchens, and eating saloons for the companies. Our pioneers erected a perfect village. Everybody purchased pine slats and made pretty huts, using their tents as peaked roofs to the structures. A chapel of considerable pretensions was raised—and here the difference between Connecticut and New York soldiers was apparent in more than one way, but in none more than in this. While the New York battery at our side thought first of all of erecting a theatre, *we* built a hospital and a chapel. While *they* gave their leisure to studying parts and rehearsing them, *we* organized prayer meetings, a choir, and endeavored in various ways to perfect ourselves as soldiers and men. Of great benefit was the presence of ladies in our camp. A number of officers and men had asked their wives to visit them in camp, and ere long a pretty row of cottages extended on the right flank of the grounds; in these there was singing, and chatting, and playing euchre or whist, and other social games almost every evening. And the demeanor of every soldier in the camp of the Sixteenth Connecticut at that time was *gentlemanly*. Not an oath was heard, not a phrase that in any way could offend the ear of a virtuous female; not an act perpetrated that savored of [45] anything but deference and respect toward the sex. To complete the softening influence thus cast on the regiment the Colonel's mother, Mrs. Burnham, paid us a visit, and went among the men as such a good, sensible old lady, with a heart full of kindness, and a head full of shrewd Connecticut sense, would naturally do. She advised and comforted those in trouble, listened to complaints and nursed the sick. She was regarded as a representative of the good respectable home life which we had left, and to which we would sooner or later return, and the veneration and affection of the regiment for her was unbounded.

During all these weeks the military standing of the regiment rose perceptibly. There was not a cleaner, prompter, more loyal, reliable, and honest regiment in the service. No brighter arms, no quicker evolutions, no greater perfection in drill was to be found any where. The dress parade every evening gathered a crowd of lookers on. The guards, if detailed to other points, attracted attention. And the name of the Sixteenth was a good name in every man's mouth."

EXCURSION THROUGH DISMAL SWAMP.

On September 9th, five companies were detailed to go to South Mills, to do two weeks picketing. South Mills was about twenty-two miles from our outposts, and within seven miles of Elizabeth City. It was infested by guerrillas, and was merely held that no rebels might come through Dismal Swamp and surprise us. It was about the only place in that famous swamp where a few houses could be built and called a village. The detachment, [46] under the command of Major Pasco, reached Deep Creek that morning, at half past nine. At Deep Creek the five companies, together with two wagons loaded with provisions, embarked on two canal boats, and hitching mules to the boats we were on the way to North Carolina. The scenery through the swamp was novel. This mode of traveling was new to the soldiers, and was highly enjoyed. Some footed it on the tow-path, some played chess, or cards, others smoked and read, and others danced to music from a fiddle and guitar, played by Dennison and Thompson. The canal was filled with turtles, snakes, and frogs of

large dimensions. Thousands of snakes were killed that day, as the boat moved slowly along by the men cutting them in two with willow switches.

Arriving at South Mills at 7 P.M. we immediately proceeded to encamp in the dark by the side of Spier's cavalry about half a mile from the wharf; but before we could pitch our tents a terrible thunder storm came up and continued all night. Such a storm of lightning, thunder and rain, but few of us ever witnessed before. We were about drowned out by morning. The next day was a lively one. We changed camp in the morning, and three of the cavalry who were on picket were fired into by a party of about 40 guerrillas. One of the men was shot in three places and expired immediately. His horse was also shot in three places, the other two escaped all injuries. Two companies of cavalry were immediately sent out and scoured the woods, but could find nothing. One of our spies came in and informed us that the guerrilla camp numbering about 800, had found out our strength and [47] position and they would probably attack us. So we moved our camp to our original position by the side of the cavalry for safety. In the evening a guerrilla, while trying to crawl through the lines, was caught by the pickets. The next day three men were arrested, one of which proved to be a guerrilla, and was sent to General Getty for sentence. His name was Finley. Late in the evening three more companies of the 5th Pennsylvania cavalry came to reinforce us. On September 14th a spy came into camp and informed us that the commander of the guerrilla band was in town, and that he was to leave that night with four recruits. Captain Robinson, with 26 picked men, were detailed to go out and lay in ambush, where he was to pass. But we lost them as they had passed there in the afternoon.

On Tuesday, September 15th, three scouting parties, consisting of the 5th and 11th Pennsylvania cavalry went out in the morning on three roads and returned in the evening, bringing with them five rebel soldiers and a colored man. On the 21st, five companies of the 15th Connecticut relieved us and the next day we returned to our old camp at Portsmouth. This trip, although dangerous on account of guerrillas, who were continually shooting at us if we strayed a short distance from our command, was much enjoyed by the men. The excursion we shall always look back upon with pleasure. The beautiful scenery, and many incidents and exciting times we shall never forget. The frightful noises of Dismal Swamp in the night cannot be imagined by one who has never been there. A night in Dismal Swamp is never forgotten.

After our return from South Mills there was another of what the boys called "a long [48] spell" of quiet, the time being used up mostly by picket duty. Thanksgiving was observed as well as possible. On the 6th of December Sergeant Major Herbert Landon and 1st Sergeant B.F. Blakeslee received commissions as Second Lieutenants; and on New Year's Day Lieutenant Turner was promoted to be Captain. On the 3d of January, the Chapel was dedicated with ceremonies, the Chaplains of the 11th Pennsylvania, 13th New Haven, 5th Pennsylvania cavalry, and 8th and 16th Connecticut regiments taking part. The building was filled to overflowing and excellent music was furnished by a choir of ladies and gentlemen. In the evening a prayer meeting was held. The next day a few recruits came, being the only ones the regiment ever had, for while other regiments recruited largely, no one cared to enlist in the Sixteenth, a regiment noted for having severe hardships. And it was very unfortunate for those who joined us that day, for nearly all of them died in prison. On the 20th of January orders came to be ready to move at an early hour the next morning. In accordance with the order the men were up as early as one o'clock; and at precisely three o'clock the camp was fired and in a few moments nothing was left of the finest camp we ever had. Taking the cars we went to Portsmouth.

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CHAPTER VI.

ToC

1864.

PLYMOUTH.

At Portsmouth the companies E, K, G, and B went aboard the steamer S.R. Spalding and the remainder on the Vidette. The weather was very fine and we had merry times and a fine sail around Cape Hatteras, reaching Morehead City on the morning of the 23d and proceeded thence by rail to New Berne. We left New Berne at midnight on the "John Farron" for Plymouth, and arrived there at midnight on the 24th. On the 26th Companies A, C, and H, under Capt. Hintz, went on a raid with other troops, under Col. Maxwell.

These companies returned on the 28th, and after that there were several raids into the interior, which the men enjoyed very much, as they had exciting times in breaking up rebel cavalry camps and capturing and burning up large quantities of cotton and tobacco, besides taking a number of prisoners. For some time the regiment lay here, going on raids, doing picket duty, and making such fine dress parades that it called forth the entire town every evening. One little incident which occurred here, and as it has been published, I will insert it as written by Serg't Maj. Robert H. Kellogg:

[50]

"There's one thing, at least, to be said in favor of Plymouth. It was the home of a few "true blue," loyal Southerners—a *very* few, however. They were hard to find, and I fear they are yet. The loyal men before spoken of, and some who were not loyal, were blessed with numerous daughters, fair to behold, but apt to have a few little weaknesses, such as 'dipping snuff' and smoking corn cob pipes. One of these men lived in a small house half way between the camp of the 16th and the western or left end of the town, and was blessed (or cursed, I doubt if he knew which at times,) with three daughters, and pretty ones they were. 'The prettiest girls I've seen yet!' was the emphatic declaration of each succeeding man who was lucky enough by dint of long watching or shrewd stratagem to get a peep at them. For, be it known, the father was as watchful over these fair scions of his house, as any ogre, read of in fairy tales, could possibly have been over his captives. Perhaps he had read some sensation tale of 'excesses of a brutal and licentious soldiery,' and thereupon resolved to keep his household uncontaminated from the least approach of such an insidious foe. I can not think he had taken a good square look into the honest faces of the 16th men, nor heard Chaplain Dixon preach to his crowded audience of boys in blue, every Sunday. At all events he seemed determined that no officer or soldier should form the acquaintance of his girls. On the other hand, our boys were quite as determined that they *would* become acquainted with them. But how was it to be done? That was the question which was presented to the mind of many a one who had cast 'sheep's eyes' at that humble dwelling in the hope of getting a glimpse at its fair inmates. Many and various were the plans which were made, but alas!

[51]

'The best laid schemes o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us naught but grief and pain,
For promised joy.'

"None had been successful until at last one day two members of Co. "A" walked coolly and boldly into the forbidden cottage. First let me give the names of the ones who did it, then I'll tell *how* they did it. The persistent and successful schemers were Corporal Sam Belden, (remembered by every one of his surviving comrades to-day and by many friends in this vicinity,) and Private John Quinn. And this was 'the way the fort was taken.' After much polishing of buttons and brushing of uniforms, they obtained possession of the Company Clothing Book and another volume of similar size, which they found in the Orderly Sergeant's tent; and on a pleasant afternoon quietly left the camp, unnoticed, and proceeded to the scene of interest. A modest knock at the door brought out 'pater familias' or 'old tar heels' as the unsuccessful besiegers spitefully termed him. Corporal Sam coolly informed him, with that imperturbable gravity of countenance and manner for which he was celebrated, that they were deputed by General Wessells, who was in command of the Post, *to take the census of the town*. There was no getting around *that*, for an order emanating from such a source was not to be lightly disobeyed; so they were rather ungraciously admitted to the heretofore unvisited house—couldn't call it a mansion by any stretch of the imagination. Once seated inside, Corporal Sam as spokesman, commenced a [52] series of questions which the U.S. Census Commissioners would have hard work to equal, private Q. jotting down the replies of the blushing and confused girls, and of the astonished father. Of course, by this cool and ingenious method they obtained the names of all, their ages, and other interesting information, and moreover they did it all with such suavity, and conducted themselves with such gentlemanly deportment, that, from that day they were invited, happy, envied, and regular visitors at the forbidden house."

On March 3d, at noon, the regiment was again on board the "John Farron," and on its way to Newbern, arriving there the next day evening and quartering in barracks near the Neuse River.

On the 11th the "Lancer" brought our baggage, and also the sad news of the drowning of Captain Mix, who in attempting to return to the regiment took a small schooner for Roanoke Island. While in Albemarle Sound, a squall struck the boat; and the boom knocked Capt. Mix overboard, as he sat smoking on deck. A boat was instantly lowered; but when within twenty-five feet, he sank. He was a good swimmer, but was encumbered with a heavy overcoat and large boots. He was well versed in tactics and military discipline, and was the last of the original captains of the Sixteenth.

On March 17th, Company "G," was ordered to Fort Stevenson, to relieve the Twenty-first, who were ordered to Little Washington.

On March 20th, a negro riot occurred across the Trent River. Captain Burke, with one [53] hundred men of the Sixteenth, soon quelled it, bringing with him between two and three hundred prisoners, whom he turned over to the Provost Marshal.

Pack up at once, was the order soon after tattoo, and at midnight the regiment with all its baggage was aboard the "Thomas Collyer," returning to Plymouth. It was terribly stormy and rough; and at seven in the evening the vessel got out of the channel and ran aground in Albemarle Sound, a distance of about seven miles from Roanoke Island Landing. Here we lay until half past eleven on the morning of the 23d, the gale blowing terrifically, and the boat going higher and higher on the ground with every wave. The men were without rations, and suffering terribly from the cold and freezing spray. *A flag of distress* was raised, but not until the storm abated did any vessel dare come for our rescue. Finally the "General Berry," which was at Roanoke Island and had been watching for twenty-four hours, came and took us to Plymouth. The "Thomas Collyer" was nearly dashed to pieces, and it was some months before she was got off the bank, and was put in running order. The regiment lost considerable camp and garrison equipage, and some ordnance stores, which were washed overboard.

BATTLE OF PLYMOUTH, 1864.

I find in my diary, as early as March 24, that our pickets were fired into by rebel scouting parties, and on the next day we were expecting to be attacked. This rumor probably arose from some contrabands whom we traded with at the picket post, on the [54] Columbia road, and who reported the enemy in large numbers in two counties south of us. These reports, together with the information General Wessells received, that the ram Albemarle was about completed, led the General on the 13th of April to ask for more troops, in order to hold the place if attacked. General Butler replied: "You will have to defend the district with your present force, and you will make such disposition of them as will in your judgment best subserve this end."

About the 14th of April, while officer of the picket, on the Lee's Mill road, an officer of General Wessells' staff and the officer of the day, invited me to accompany them outside of the lines, to see what information we could pick up. Mounting cavalry horses, we went out a distance of four or five miles, returning by the way of the Columbia road picket post. At one house where we stopped, a lady who had just arrived from the interior said that the rebels were concentrating, and it was reported that they were going to attack Plymouth. As I had heard these stories before, I paid but little attention to her report at the time.

On Saturday, April 16th, two days after, I was again officer of the picket on the Columbia road. The next morning (Sunday) at dawn, while asleep at the reserve post, I was awakened by the discharge of a musket by the picket at the bridge. Rushing to the spot, I found the picket to be William Maxwell, of Company A. He reported five or six scouts who had come to the edge of the woods suddenly, but fled on being fired at. I reported the fact to General Wessells, on being relieved at nine o'clock A.M. He seemed to [55] think them guerrillas, but they proved to be advance guards, for in the afternoon when most of the soldiers were in church, the pickets were attacked by cavalry on the Washington and Lee's Mill roads simultaneously, and so sudden was the attack on the Washington road that the entire reserve picket were taken prisoners.

The "long roll" was sounded, and the troops prepared for the attack. Light artillery and cavalry were immediately sent out to ascertain the strength of the enemy. They had a short engagement, resulting in one killed, and Lieutenant Russell of New York Cavalry badly wounded. In the garrison, there were besides the Sixteenth Conn. Vols., the Eighty-fifth New York Volunteers, One Hundred and First, and One Hundred and Third Pennsylvania Volunteers, Twenty-fourth New York Independent Battery, two companies of the Second Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, two companies of New York Cavalry, and two companies Second North Carolina Volunteers, making in all 1,600 effective men. Early in the evening the enemy made a furious attack upon Fort Gray, on the river, a mile above the town. By eleven o'clock in the evening it was ascertained that the enemy had a force of between ten and twelve thousand men, and all loyal women and children in the place were embarked on board the "Massasoit," and sent to Roanoke Island. It was very evident to us that we must either be killed or go to "Libby." Company "H," Captain Barnum, had been sent that morning to Roanoke Island for duty, and therefore a remnant of the regiment avoided the fate of prison life in the south.

The next day the enemy opened with artillery at an early hour, and the firing on the [56] skirmish line was very lively until eleven o'clock. Captain Burke was wounded in the shoulder during the morning. At five o'clock in the afternoon I was detailed with fifty men to skirmish with the enemy on the Lee's Mill road for an hour or two to allow the regular picket line a little rest and time to eat. I had hardly got the line properly deployed, when it seems the enemy were ready to make their assault on the town. From the woods emerged the Confederates in great numbers. The loyal line fired a few regular shots, but the enemy came pouring out of the woods in such numbers that the Union line withered and shrank

back. The enemy's artillery came to the crest of the hill, and so well was it manned that our camps were completely riddled, and Fort Williams partially silenced.

It was a regular artillery fight, and many old army officers said it was the handsomest artillery duel they ever witnessed. Three of the Sixteenth were wounded in the engagements in the skirmish line, one of whom was A.P. Forbes, of Company B. The enemy came on so rapidly, and we retired so slowly, that the two lines nearly met. One of the Sixteenth was pressed so closely that, in the dusk of the evening, he dodged behind a stump and thereby saved himself from capture. He was so near the Confederate battery that he overheard a staff officer give the order, "It is no use, captain, we cannot endure this fire, —limber to the rear." The enemy retiring, he returned inside our ranks.

Heavy artillery firing was kept up until eleven o'clock P.M., and under cover of the darkness, the enemy advanced up to Fort Wessells, a work about ten hundred yards in front of the line of fortifications. Fort Wessells was furiously stormed three separate times, by a very superior force with great loss of life. The third time it had to succumb, and sixty men were captured. The fort was well supplied with hand grenades, which were used with great effectiveness. It was during this night that the famous ram, "Albemarle," came down the Roanoke river, passing our batteries, sank the Southfield, and drove off the balance of the fleet of gunboats. The Bombshell had previously gone up the river, and in returning was so completely riddled by the enemy's batteries, that she sank on arriving at the dock. [57]

The next day their artillery opened on the right of the town, but the lay of the ground in front of our works was such that it was really our strongest point. A few of their infantry advanced into a ravine in our front, and were unable to extricate themselves until dark.

During the day the town was pretty effectually shelled, and a caisson was blown up on each side. Our navy being entirely gone, the ram "Albemarle" did good service for the enemy, with ninety and two hundred pound shot.

Three separate times were we asked to surrender and save further sacrifice of life, but each was peremptorily declined. General Hoke (rebel) the last time replying, "I will fill your citadel *full* of iron; I will compel your surrender, if I have to fight to the last man."

There was no doubt now but what we must succumb sooner or later. There was no hope unless reinforced, and that could not be as long as the ram was in the river. The men built bombproofs and traverses, which were a great protection. [58]

Late in the evening, Co. "G" was ordered to the left of the town, on the Columbia road. They lay there during the night, preventing the gunners on the ram from sighting their guns and coming on deck; they also had two little brushes with cavalry, who broke through the line to procure beef that was in a yard near by. The enemy, meanwhile, were concentrating nearly half their force opposite this point.

By 4.30 o'clock on the morning of the 20th, (I find from their accounts,) they had ten regiments of infantry, four battalions of artillery, (Pegram's, Blunt's, Marshall's, and Lee's,) and two companies of cavalry, besides the "Albemarle" and "Cotton Plant." This must have made a force of five or six thousand in line about six hundred yards in front of our works. At this hour a rocket was sent up as the signal for the attack, and a more furious charge we never witnessed. Instantly over our heads came a peal of thunder from the ram. Up rose a curling wreath of smoke—the batteries had opened, and quickly flashed fierce forks of flame—loud and earth-shaking roars in quick succession. Lines of men came forth from the woods—the battle had begun.

Company G, being on the skirmish line, fell back and entered "Coneby redoubt," properly barred the gate and manned the works. The enemy, with yells, charged on the works, in heavy column, jumped into the ditch, climbed the parapet, and, with the artillery company (who had previously occupied the redoubt), for fifteen murderous minutes, were [59]

shot down like mown grass. The conflict was bloody, short, and decisive. The enemy were in such numbers that we had to yield. The gate had been crushed down by rebel shot, and the enemy poured in to the number of five or six hundred, with thousands on the outside. Great confusion then ensued; guns were spiked, musket barrels bent, and all sorts of mischief practiced by the Union soldiers, while the enemy were swearing at a terrible rate, because we would not take off equipments and inform them if the guns could be turned on the town, and in trying to reorganize their troops, who were badly mixed, to take the next work. We were prisoners, and as we marched out of the fort we could see at what a fearful cost it was to them. There were in the fort at the time, forty artillery men, who fired grape and canister, and forty-two of Company "G," (two being unable to get in, or not hearing the orders, went back to town,) making a total of eighty-two men, against five or six thousand. Our loss was one wounded, an artillery man, while the rebel loss, from their latest accounts, was five hundred killed and wounded. The enemy then passed in the rear and on the bank of the river, to the right of the town, and while part of their force was on the right working towards the center, those on the left were doing the same. Every position was obstinately maintained. A squad of men here, and a squad there, the redoubts and forts were but slowly captured. For three or four hours, Fort Williams, with guns turned, did murderous execution, nearly two hours of which was in the streets of Plymouth. By half-past ten o'clock the last gun had been fired, the flag over our citadel lowered, and *Plymouth had fallen.* [60]

The troops were captured by an overwhelming force, after one of the severest fights of the war. In the words of J.W. Merrill, the author of "Records of the Twenty-fourth N.Y. Battery," "there is no question that the defense of Plymouth by its garrison of 1,600 men against a besieging force of 12,000 men, was one of the hardest fought battles of the war." The rebels raised the "black flag" against the negroes found in uniform, and mercilessly shot them down.

The shooting in cold blood of three or four hundred negroes and two companies of North Carolina troops who had joined our army, and even murdering peaceable citizens (as I have the personal knowledge of the killing, with the butt-end of a musket, of Mr. Spruell, the man whom I boarded with, and by the way, a secessionist, for objecting to the plundering of a trunk which he had packed), were scenes of which the Confederates make no mention, except the hanging of one person, but of which many of us were eye-witnesses, was but the Fort Pillow massacre re-enacted.

The following order was issued the day after the capture by Gen. Peck:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AND DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA, }
NEWBERN, N.C., April 21, 1864. }

General Orders, } No. 66. }

With feelings of the deepest sorrow the commanding general announces the fall of Plymouth, N.C., and the capture of its gallant commander, Brigadier-General H.W. Wessels and his command. This result, however, was not obtained until after the most gallant and determined resistance had been made. Five times the enemy stormed the lines of the General, and as many times were they handsomely repulsed with great slaughter, and but for the powerful assistance of the Rebel iron clad ram and the floating sharp-shooter battery, the Cotton Plant, Plymouth would still have been in our hands. For their noble defense the gallant General Wessells and his brave band have and deserve the warmest thanks of the whole country, while all will sympathize with them in their misfortune. To officers and men of the navy the Commanding General tenders his thanks for their hearty co-operation with the army, and the bravery, determination and courage that marked their part of the unequal contest. With sorrow he records [61]

the death of the noble sailor and gallant patriot, Lieutenant Commander C.W. Flusser, U.S.N., who, in the heat of battle, fell dead on the deck of his ship, with the lanyard of his gun in his hand.

The Commanding General believes that these misfortunes will tend not to discourage but to nerve the Army of North Carolina to equal deeds of bravery and gallantry hereafter. Until further order, the headquarters of the sub-district of the Albemarle will be at Roanoke Island.

The command devolves upon Colonel D.W. Wardrop, of the Ninety-ninth New York Infantry.

By command of

Major-General G. PECK.

J.A. JUDSON, Assistant Adjutant-General.

While I have given an extended account of the position and service, of Company "G," the remaining companies were not less exposed, nor did less fighting. The losses in the Sixteenth were one killed and twelve wounded. The total losses in the garrison were fifteen killed and about one hundred wounded. The number captured was about sixteen hundred. The accounts in the northern papers were meagre and greatly exaggerated, giving generally the losses of killed and wounded equal to the entire garrison, and the losses of the enemy in equal proportion to their number. The Richmond papers gave long and very accurate accounts of each day's operations, but suppressed their losses and the killing in cold blood of the North Carolina soldiers, negroes, and citizens. Their latest accounts, however, admit from four to six hundred killed and from fifteen hundred to two thousand wounded. The Rebel Government considered Plymouth of great importance, and promised Gen. Hoke a Major-General's commission if he would take the place. It was this incentive that made him storm the works with such desperation. From the Richmond papers we find mentioned as operating against us sixteen regiments of infantry, eleven batteries divided into two battalions and commanded by Majors Reid and Mosely. The artillery, together with two companies of cavalry, were commanded by Col. Deering. In addition to the above were the ram Albemarle and consort Cotton Plant. The whole force was divided into three brigades, (Hoke's, Ransom's, and Kemper's) commanded respectively by Col. Mercer, Gen. Ransom, and Col. Terry. [62]

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improvements in and out of the hospital, and to look to the cleanliness of the tents, company streets, and the cooking utensils. He also saw that the food issued was properly prepared by the cooks; and when he gave cough syrup, it was not *stuff* that men would use on their food for molasses.

NEWPORT NEWS AND SUFFOLK.

On the 6th of February, 1863, our connection with the Army of the Potomac was dissolved. We were ordered to Newport News, where the regeneration of the regiment steadily progressed. At three o'clock in the morning the regiment was ordered to *pack up*, and be ready to march in two hours. It was pitch dark and raining terribly, with mud six inches deep. It was some little time before the men could get bon-fires burning, so that we could see to pack up. The men dressed, took what rations they could get, and fell into line after repeated orders, leaving most of the tents standing, they being wet and too heavy to carry. Marching to the depot, the mud was not only deep but extremely slippery, and nearly every man slipped down, and those that did not, were completely spattered over from head to foot, and were covered with mud and completely drenched through to the skin by the rain, which was decidedly uncomfortable that cold morning. After shivering in the cold for two hours, we were allowed to get aboard the freight cars, and were taken to Aequia Creek. Here we went [31]

resisted all attempts to take this stronghold. On Monday our artillery opened vigorously on the town; and during the day both parties pounded away at each other incessantly; but beyond a little skirmishing with the enemy and manœuvering for position our infantry did nothing. Toward evening, however, it became evident that something was on foot; and Ransom's brigade, and the 8th N.C. was drawn up in the woods facing the works on the Washington, Lee's Mill and Bath roads. A heavy line of skirmishers was thrown out under the command of Captain John Pegram, A.A.G., and advancing rapidly with the peculiar gait of sharp shooters and the yell with which our boys go to the charge, drove the enemy back into his works, and approached within two hundred and fifty yards of the fort, earnestly demanding to be led into the place. Meanwhile Pegram's battery dashed forward at a run, supported by the infantry, and unlimbering, devoted a [64] furious fire upon the place. Three times we advanced, each time nearer, until within good charging distance; but the artillery had it all to themselves. The movement was merely a demonstration to call off the enemy's attention from Hoke's attack upon Fort Wessells, which, after a sharp but short resistance, fell before the superior powers of Hoke's brigade; and that night's work was done.

The *Gunboat appears on the scene.* Leaving a line of pickets on the field, the main body of the troops withdrew to prepare, by a few hours rest, for the attack, which we all felt would be made on the morrow, and as we lay down by our fires, every one wondered at the Albemarle's delay, and prayed for her speedy arrival. At three in the morning we were all awakened by the thunder of her Blakely guns, as she defiantly saluted Warren Neck, *en passant*, and sailed safely by over the obstructions which the enemy had placed in the river. She went to work at once among the enemy's gunboats, sinking one and driving the rest to Hatteras, and then turning her attention to the fortifications, she kept up a speedy fire during the morning, silencing the enemy's guns, and driving him into his bombproofs. But still the "stars and stripes" floated over his works, and as he refused, when summoned to strike his colors, it became necessary for us to do it ourselves, and the evening and night of the 19th were devoted to preparing for the assault on the morning of the 20th. Kemper's brigade had fought gallantly at Warren Neck. Hoke's men had taken Fort Wessells with three guns and sixty prisoners. It was now Ransom's turn.

The Columbia road which enters the town at its eastern extremity, running parallel with the river and near it, crosses Coneby creek about a mile from town: To this point Ransom's brigade, the 8th N.C. and Pegram's battery marched late in the evening of the 19th, behind a screen of woods, which hid the movement from the enemy, and reached the creek about sunset. The bridge was destroyed, and the creek was too deep to be forded. A strong picket of the enemy was on the opposite bank behind entrenchments, and about three-quarters of a mile off were two 32-pounders and five 12-pounders bearing on the spot. The pontoons must be laid for the infantry and artillery to cross, and that quickly or the movement would be a failure. The moon was shining brightly, turning night almost into day, and not a breath of air was stirring, so that every movement we made could be distinctly heard or seen by the enemy. Lieutenant Marshall Lee, with twenty men of Co. E 24th, was advanced to the water's edge supported by the rest of the company, and Co. A of the 35th, the whole under the command of Captain Barna Lane.

The pontoon train, under Lieutenant Pool, 10th N.C.T., dashed down at a [65]
gallop, slid one boat into the creek and quickly and rapidly the two companies crossed and were immediately engaged with the enemy. The 24th followed at once, the men coming into line as fast as they got over, and the enemy fell back, closely pursued by Captain Lane's command, deployed as skirmishers. The pontoons were now laid and by 8 o'clock the infantry was over and formed in line of battle, the left resting on the road and the right on the river in the following order: First on the right the 55th, second the 25th, third the 8th, fourth the 36th, fifth the 24th, with two companies on the south of the road. In this position, we lay during the night, sheltering ourselves as well as we could from the enemy's two works on the road, which kept up a constant fire until nearly day break. Just before day a strong line of skirmishers was thrown out before the brigade under command of Captain Durham, Q.M., 29 N.C.T., but acting temporarily on General Ransom's staff. *The Assault.* At just 3-½ the morning of the 20th our line began to move forward, slowly at first, dressing on the center, and halting occasionally for that purpose. From the start the fire from the enemy's batteries was rapid and severe, striking down many a brave fellow; but closing up the gaps, the long line moved silently on, the left still resting on the road, till Pegram's battery, dashing forward at a run unlimbered in front, and opened fire on the enemy's works.

Then for the first time that morning our boys gave a loud yelling of defiance, and quickening their pace to a double-quick, pressed with a determination not to be resisted right upon the enemy's two works, which were taken with scarcely a moment's delay, the one on the south of the road, by the left of the 24th, led by Colonel Clarke and the one on the right by the right of the 24th, assisted by the 25th. The enemy fled in terror to the houses, Fort Williams, and any other place which suffered them protection from the fierce fire of our pursuing ranks. We were now in the town, and the head of every street running east and west was held by one or more of our regiments; but their position in line was somewhat changed. The 24th was still on the Columbia road, now street, with the 56th and 25th to the right, and the 35th and 8th to the left. Halting a moment to breathe the men and dress the lines, we pushed slowly and carefully forward, clearing the enemy from every street, yard, and house, from the windows of which and from behind the fences they poured an incessant fire. But nothing could check our progress and in an hour the enemy were all driven into Fort Williams or the entrenched camp. The fort was on our left and the camp in front. Leaving the 35th, the 8th, and a portion of the 24th, to contend with the fort, the rest [66]
pushed on for the camp, which the 24th being on the direct road soon reached and opened fire, exposed still to a severe musketry fire from the fort on the flank and the camp in front. In a few minutes the 56th came up on the right by another street, and by their arrival decided the contest, for immediately on the appearance of this additional force the enemy threw down his arms, and raised the white flag. Captain Lockheart, of the 56th, ran in to receive the surrender, and instantly both regiments poured into the camp, and throwing down their own foul guns and empty cartridge boxes, took the clean, well-filled ones, which were lying about, and pressed on through the tents to the western side of the camp, where they could see the United States flag floating over Fort Williams, evidence that the fighting was not yet done. Here we were shortly joined by the 43d North Carolina of Hoke's brigade,

who came in from the west, having been delayed by a morass, which they had great difficulty in crossing.

The Town in our own hands. The town was ours. Every house and street in it was swept of the enemy, who shut up in his stronghold, still refused to surrender. This was a case for the artillerist and the guns of the captured forts were soon turned upon their stronger brother, fighting as the result shows, better for us than they had against us. Captain Cooke too of the Albemarle dropped some of his 90 pound shell among them. Still they resisted stoutly, showing a disposition to die rather than to yield. At last, however, some of our boys creeping forward through the entrenchments, got an enfilading fire upon them, which soon brought them to terms, and hundreds of them rushed out of the fort without arms and surrendered. Just at this moment a shell burst directly on the magazine, and when the smoke cleared away the hated flag was fluttering rapidly down to the ground. Without waiting for orders, the brigade swarmed into the fort, Company B, of the 24th, leading, and the color of everything was quickly changed from blue to grey."

From the *Examiner*, April 22d:

"The details of the affair at Plymouth are not yet fully ascertained. It is safe, however, to pronounce it one of the most brilliant affairs of the war. Its immediate fruits are important. Those which may ultimately flow from it, the possession of an abundant country, and the possible command of the inland waters of North Carolina, though as yet the subject of uncertain speculation, may well excite high hopes for the future. General Hoke, judging from the large number of his prisoners, does not seem to have made such thorough work as that by which Forrest has so shocked the tender souls and frozen the warm blood of the Yankees. The resistance he encountered was probably not as desperate, and the blood of the victors not so heated; though in a fortification carried by storm the loss of the garrison must inevitably be large. The strict laws of civilized warfare acknowledge the power of the victors to put all to the sword in such cases. However severe such an example might seem it would strike a salutary terror into the Yankees, which would be useful to them in the end, and their melancholy whine, at meeting a part of the punishment their barbarities merit, is absurd." [67]

From the *Examiner*, April 25th:

"Tuesday evening a flag of truce was sent to Fort Williams, demanding the surrender of the enemy. The flag was taken by Colonel Deering and another officer; and General Wessels, the Yankee commander, refused to treat with them, but requested a conference with the General commanding. At the interview which ensued the Yankee commander said to General Hoke, that if he surrendered he would be sacrificed by his Government, and, he feared, would be retired from the service. "Then," replied General Hoke, "I understand that you are fighting for your commission and for no other cause. If such is your reply, I have only to compel your surrender, which I will do if I have to fight to the last man." The general assault followed Wednesday morning. It was made by all our forces. As our troops came within range of

the enemy's artillery, they suffered very severely, as the ground in front had been surveyed and was staked off with target posts for artillery practice. Latham's battery had been placed just by one of the targets, and was shelled with such skill by the enemy that all his horses had been killed. The accounts of his casualties are deplorable, and we trust they may be reduced by the more exact statements, which will be officially given."

From the *Examiner*, April 30th:

"*The Capture of Plymouth in the North.* The news of the fall of Plymouth had reached the North. Of course, after their several days of felicitation that "the fort would surely hold out," this news was sudden and unwelcome to them. The *Tribune* announces it under this imposing head, in very large capitals: *Surrender of Plymouth. General Wessels and one thousand five hundred men prisoners. Our loss one hundred and fifty killed. The rebel loss one thousand and seven hundred killed. North Carolina troops taken out and shot after surrendering. All negroes in uniform also murdered.* [68]

It is positively affirmed that the rebels in taking possession of Plymouth, ordered out the North Carolina (Union) troops, who formed part of the garrison, and shot them; and that all negroes found in uniform were murdered. We presume the account is correct, and it only proves that what was supposed to be an exceptional barbarity at Fort Pillow, has been adopted as the deliberate policy of the rebels. As the issue is to be made it must be met."

From the *Examiner*, May 3d:

(Extract from a letter on the *Victory of Plymouth*, dated Plymouth, N.C., April 24, 1864.)

* * * "During Monday night Hoke's and Kemper's brigades slept on their arms in the position they had gained. Before day break next morning three regiments of Ransom's brigade and Col. Branch's artillery were ordered to support them, and Ransom, with two regiments and artillery, was again ordered to the right to make a demonstration. At light the enemy opened a heavy artillery fire upon our position, to which we replied, also turning their own guns from the captured fort upon them. General Hoke, after making a more thorough reconnoissance on Tuesday morning, did not attack on the left, hence returned Ransom's regiments to him on the right. About midday he determined to send Ransom's brigade, with artillery, to the right, Coneby's bridge a distance of four or five miles, to make a simultaneous demonstration with him, while he would attack from his position on the left with his and Kemper's brigades. Ransom reached the bridge about dark, threw forward his skirmishers, who found the enemy in strong position on the opposite side, and the bridge destroyed. Finding the enemy were in the rifle pits and stubbornly refusing to yield the position, three pieces of artillery, under. Captain Blount, were advanced to within three hundred yards of the bridge and the enemy were soon dislodged. Our sharpshooters again advanced and the enemy re-appeared when some gallant fellow of the 24th

N.C. regiment plunged into the creek, brought back a skiff, and immediately a party of select men were put over in it, and ordered, at all hazards to drive the enemy. The pontoons were hurried to the front, one placed in the creek, which ferried over three or four companies that followed, deployed as skirmishers, and the enemy fled, abandoning a position of vital importance to them. The pontoons were soon *laid*, and the infantry consisting of the 24th [69]
N.C., Col. Clark; 25th Alabama, Col. Rutledge; 56th N.C., Col. Faison; 35th N.C., Col. Jones; and (of Clingman's brigade) the 8th N.C., Col. Murchison, passed rapidly over and deployed into line at about a mile from the enemy's outposts, the right flank resting on the Roanoke, and the left on Coneby Creek. The artillery commanded by Col. Branch, did not cross, as the enemy could easily hear the crossing, and would shell furiously at the least noise. About twelve o'clock the troops were all in position, and were ordered to sleep on their arms and rest for the heavy work just ahead of them. The night was perfectly calm and cloudless, with the full moon shedding its soothing beams upon the sleeping veterans as they lay upon the bare ground, covered with their blankets in groups of two or three for warmth, as the air was sharp and piercing, seeming not even to dream of the morning's carnage. The field officers in rear of their regiments paced to and fro unable to rest from the heavy responsibilities that were crowding upon them. Along the line of the skirmishers commanded by "the fighting Quartermaster Durham" and the gallant Applewhite, the quick blaze of the rifle, like fire-flies at night, was the only relief from the dead calm that prevailed around, as the enemy's heavy guns, however, were belching forth shell and spherical case, firing with great accuracy. When Generals Hoke and Ransom separated, it was understood that as soon as the latter was in position, he would signalize the fact by a rocket, when General Hoke, with his and Kemper's brigades, would attack on the left, and Ransom on the right, would make an attack or a demonstration, as he thought best. After making a reconnoissance, Ransom at one o'clock in the morning (Wednesday), dispatched General Hoke that he was in position, but would defer all movements until the dawn of day, when he would not *demonstrate, but attack, and intended to carry the place by assault*, asking from General Hoke his simultaneous co-operation. He called together his field officers, communicated to them his purpose and plans, and by his confidence, coolness, and resource seemed to inspire them thoroughly with his own self-reliance. As a ruse, he determined to place his artillery in the rear of his infantry, and thereby cause the enemy to overshoot our lines, which proved a complete success. The moon had just gone down and the gray streaks of the morning were faintly visible in the east, when the signal rocket went up, and the line of skirmishers were ordered to advance, which they did handsomely, driving in the enemy easily. The infantry now moved forward, and the artillery, consisting of Blount's, Marshall's, and Lee's batteries, under Colonel Branch, dashed forward at a full gallop into position, and opened immediately upon the town and forts at about twelve hundred yards. The [70]
enemy had by this time concentrated a most terrific fire from their siege guns and field pieces. Just at this time General Hoke opened, with his artillery under Majors Mosely and Reid, a very rapid and tremendous fire, and his infantry sent up yell after yell as if charging. Ransom caught up the sound, and rising in his stirrups, from the head and right of the line, in a clear and ringing voice, gave the command, "Charge, boys, and the place is yours," and such a charge and yell no one who ever saw or heard it can ever forget. It

baffles description. It was as the wildest gust of the tornado as it prostrates the forest, or the mad fire as it dashes through the prairies, it was a thunder bolt. The hail of shot, shell, canister, grape, and Minnie balls were not only unheeded but seemed unheard. The infantry and artillery fell thick and fast, but immediately the gaps were closed. In ten minutes the two outer forts, with eight guns, were captured, our infantry scaling their parapets, and the infantry within one hundred and fifty yards of the forts, horses, and limbers blown up and cannoneers shot down, and yet those remaining stood to their guns without shelter, confident of victory, and to avenge their dead. The whole command of officers and men, infantry and artillery, seemed enthused with the inspiration of certain victory. Several hundred prisoners were captured in these forts, which were immediately sent to the rear, and now began the contest for the town more than a half a mile in length, the enemy's infantry slowly retiring and stubbornly resisting our advance, Fort Williams dealing out grape and spherical case; their field pieces at the farther extremities of the broad straight streets raking them with a murderous fire; their infantry in the houses and cellars and behind fences, delivering galling charges of Minnie shot, but all of no avail. Our men were confident, aroused, and irresistible. They pressed on steadily, without halt or hesitation, tearing down fences, hedges, and every obstacle that they met, capturing the enemy at every step. Soon they were in a rout, and our infantry pressed through the town and waved their battle flags over the fortifications in front to General Hoke's forces, who could scarcely believe that so much could be accomplished in so short a time. * * Ransom's charge has not been surpassed at any time; his military genius comprehended the situation, and he was master of it. He determined upon his charge, knowing what pluck and dash could accomplish, and satisfied it was the only point of attack. With twenty-two hundred muskets and nine pieces of artillery, he charged the enemy's work which they regarded unassailable and carried them without a halt. His loss, which reached *five hundred in thirty minutes*, shows how sanguinary was the work." (Signed R.)

From the *Richmond Dispatch*, April 30th: [71]

The Fall of Plymouth. A Specimen of Yankee Lying. A Sympathetic order for General Wessels. Negro Soldiers Butchered. "The Philadelphia *Inquirer* contains the official and other announcements of the fall of Plymouth. The butchery of the negro troops is news here, though if General Hoke had butchered the whole garrison in the assault, after a refusal to surrender, it would have been perfectly proper under the laws of war. It will be seen that the loss of the Confederates is put down at fifteen hundred!! The following is a telegram dated Fortress Monroe, the 24th instant: The gallant garrison at Plymouth, after a desperate struggle with the rebel foe, who besieged them by land and water, with an infinitely superior force, were compelled to surrender, but not until they had slaughtered hundreds of the enemy in their attempts to storm the forts. The fight commenced late on Sunday afternoon, and continued until half-past ten on Wednesday morning, when the surrender was made. Our men fought with the ferocity of tigers, and they would never have yielded had there been anything like an equality of forces. But the rebels outnumbered them nearly ten to one. When the attack first was made the Confederates were twelve thousand strong, and afterwards received eight

thousand more as reinforcements. Aided as they were by their powerful ram and gunboats, it is not at all surprising that they succeeded in capturing the Town of Plymouth."

From the New York *Herald*, April 26th, 1864:

"*The Rebel Losses* are, beyond the slightest doubt, immensely heavy. When it is considered that every fort around Plymouth was stormed from three to seven times, and each assault repulsed with great slaughter, besides pouring broadside after broadside into the rebel ranks from the Miami and Southfield, the casualties among the rebel troops must have been enormous. A rebel surgeon was heard to say that "the damned Yankees had killed and wounded one-third of their whole force, and he hoped that no mercy would be shown the cursed Yankees." The gunboat Whitehead went on a reconnoissance, on Wednesday, a short distance above Plymouth, and the officers and crew observed about three hundred rebel troops engaged in burying the dead. From a steeple on the town church, overlooking a large tract of land, it was found that the field of Asa Johnson (about sixty acres), was completely filled with dead and dying rebels. The entire rebel force could not have been short of from fifteen to twenty thousand men, of whom one-third are unfit for future service.

The Fort Pillow Massacre Re-enacted. My informant also acquainted me with the fact that all the negroes found after the surrender, were stripped of their clothing and brutally murdered in cold blood. It must be understood that General Wessels had no colored troops at Plymouth, save a few recruits for North Carolina regiments, and the poor unfortunate blacks thus butchered were merely laborers for the government. The negroes were formed into line, in a nude state, and fired at by the brutal soldiery, purporting to represent Southern chivalry. Nature revolts at these facts; and the plan apparently adopted by the Rebels for the future disposition of the negroes is emancipation *from*, and not *for*, life." [72]

[73]

CHAPTER VII.

ToC

1864.

PRISON LIFE OF THE OFFICERS.

I shall not in this chapter pretend to give a complete history of Prison Life in the South, only a part. As I look back over the great mass of events that were continually

occurring during all hours of the day and night of less than one year, I give up in despair. The inhuman treatment, and fearful atrocities of our brutal keepers are heart-rending, and I can poorly illustrate them. Language is unable to describe the real condition of affairs in southern prisons. No one can present in its true light the fearful suffering experienced in them. Others have contributed sketches for the dark picture. I shall therefore be very brief.

By noon of the 20th of April, the entire garrison of Plymouth was in the hands of the rebels, and all the captured were concentrated on the Washington road. During the afternoon, the rebel cavalry scoured the woods and shot dead every colored soldier and man that was able to bear arms. The number murdered in this way must have been in the neighborhood of one hundred.

We went to sleep that night feeling very gloomy, tired, and hungry, most of us having had nothing to eat during the day. It was nothing new to us to sleep on the [74] ground without anything over us, for we were quite used to that, but we could easily see what we were to expect from the hands of the rebels, and many were thinking of home and how anxious our friends would be to hear of our fate, whether killed in the battle or captured; and if captured, *worse* than killed. The next day we had twenty-five hard crackers and on an average about ten ounces of raw salt pork issued to us. This had to last us till the morning of the 26th, making five days, thus making five crackers and two ounces of pork per day. On this we had to live and during the day make quite long marches.

Colonel Beach, Lieutenant Colonel Burnham, Major Pasco, Quartermaster Robins, Surgeon Mayer, Assistant Surgeon Nickerson, and Captain Burke, together with the wounded men, remained at Plymouth. About noon of the 21st we took up our line of march, halting about nine in the evening, making a distance of thirteen miles. We marched more or less every day until the noon of the 25th, when we arrived at Tarboro, having passed through the villages of Foster's Mill, Jamesville, Williamston, and Hamilton. Crowds of women and children lined the roadside eager to get a glimpse of the "Yankees," some hissing and insulting us in various ways. On the 23d, the 11th Virginia guarded us, and we learned that the same regiment fought against us on the Edenton road at Suffolk a year before. By the time we reached Tarboro, we were nearly starved, having been out of rations from twelve to thirty-six hours. At noon, some bacon and corn-bread were issued to the officers, and to the enlisted men in addition some peas which were by long cooking softened sufficiently to be eaten. [75] At one o'clock, April 26th, all the officers and the 85th New York went aboard the cars and were on their way to the famous prison pens of the South, thus separating the officers from the enlisted men—only a few of whom lived to meet again at New Berne a year after. Traveling all night in crowded cars, we arrived at Wilmington at daybreak, where we crossed the river by ferry boats, and again taking cars we arrived at Florence, South Carolina, at 10 P.M.

Here we again changed trains, being packed by fifties in box cars. This was a miserable night, as we were packed so closely that we could neither lie down nor sit. Some had to stand up, and those farthest from the door nearly suffocated. Leaving Florence in the morning we arrived at Charleston at 10 P.M. Here another change of cars was made, sixty being packed in each car, and we remained there all night. The next morning some hard-tack and good bacon were issued. Leaving Charleston at seven in the morning we arrived at Savannah at two P.M. Here more rations were

issued and another change of cars was made. We finally arrived at Andersonville at 2-½ o'clock the next afternoon. Having marched us to a position, where we could obtain a view of the famous pen, Capt. Wirz soon appeared on a horse, making such a comical appearance that we laughed outright. "You Got damn Yanks, you vont laugh when you get in dat Bull Pen," were his first words of greeting. Having been sent to Andersonville by mistake we were not allowed to go in to the Bull Pen, but were marched to a school house or church, where we staid until the next day. Being [76] Sunday, Chaplain Dixon gave us a short sermon from Psalms 37th, which was very appropriate and suitable under the peculiar circumstances in which we were then placed. At half past nine in the forenoon we were placed aboard the cars again, and went to Macon.

CAMP OGLETHORPE, MACON.

Here we went into Camp Oglethorpe, one hundred and ten in number, being all the officers captured at Plymouth, and going under the title of "Plymouth Pilgrims." General Howell Cobb soon rode up on his charger with a bran new saddle and bridle, and introduced himself by saying, "that we were just the fellows he wanted to see." "Why don't you go to the front then," replied Adjutant Clapp. This rather astounded the old gentleman. At this camp one day, Adjutant Clapp was having his haircut and accidently the barber nicked his ear a little. A lady who was at the time passing around the camp noticed it, and the next day sent a little brother into the camp to sell pies, and in the bottom of the basket was a book with a note directed to the soldier with the cut ear, and stating that she was from the north and sympathized with our misfortune. For good reasons I withhold her name, but she was a noble and brave girl, and afterwards risked her life in aiding Federal officers to escape.

On the 17th of May, 900 officers from Libby arrived and were placed in a pen which had been built a short distance from our camp, and in the evening we were also placed there. Here we found Lieutenant-Colonel Burnham, Major Pasco, Quartermaster Robins, and Captain Burke, who were separated from us at Plymouth. [77] Colonel Beach and Surgeon Mayer had been exchanged. Prison life had now commenced in earnest with us and we felt it deeply. We had heretofore been where we could see what was going on around us, and had the liberty of trading with hucksters and others. We were now cut off from the world, *in a pen*, with little or no shelter, and under the command of the most brutal, cruel, heartless, and inhuman men that this world produces. They were General Winder, Major Dick Turner, and Captain Tabb. As it is not the purpose of this history to record all the brutal acts of these men I give two or three to illustrate what fiends we were under. When General Stoneman made his attempt to rescue the prisoners, Winder issued an order called No. 13, which stamps the brute with infamy beyond redemption. In this order, which has been preserved, Winder commanded "the officers in charge of the artillery to open their batteries, loaded with grape-shot, as soon as the Federals approached within seven miles, and to continue the slaughter until every prisoner was exterminated." We had at this time six cannon bearing on us. "Was the prison mined," said Colonel Farnsworth to Turner, the jailor of Libby Prison, "when General Kilpatrick approached Richmond to attempt the rescue of the prisoners?" "Yes, and I would have blown you all to Hades before I would have suffered you to be rescued." Major Turner himself gave

the prisoners to understand that if any more attempts were made for their rescue, the prison would be blown to atoms. The following atrocious order from rebel headquarters was afterwards issued. "Any soldier killing a Federal soldier, [78] approaching the dead line, shall receive a furlough of sixty days; while for wounding one, he shall receive a furlough for thirty days." Under this order many were shot, who had no intentions of escaping. On May 29th, Assistant-Surgeon Nickerson was brought into prison. On June 10th, fifty of the officers, (Lieutenant-Colonel Burnham being one of the number,) were taken to Charleston and placed under the fire of the Union batteries on Morris Island.

We had religious services very regularly and they were well attended after the rebels found out that we would have them, cost what they would. I think it was the second service that we had, and on Sunday evening, for during the day word came to the commandant of the prison, Captain Tabb, that "the prisoners were praying for Abraham Lincoln, Grant, and Sherman." Services had commenced in the evening and the congregation were singing the first hymn, when in came Captain Tabb accompanied by the officer of the day. They at once inquired who had charge of the meeting, and being informed that it was Chaplain White, came up to him, and, entering into conversation, told him "he (Captain Tabb) could not allow any praying in there for the President of the United States." Meanwhile the hymn was concluded, when Chaplain Dixon, of the 16th, knowing what was up, at once stepped forward and began to pray, asking God to bless all in authority, especially the President of the United States, his cabinet and Congress, and all his advisers, also that he would bless General Grant and his glorious army; that he might be successful in capturing [79] Richmond, the capital and stronghold of the rebellion; that he would also bless Sherman, spare his life, give him wisdom to carry out his plans, that his army might be a victorious one all through its campaign; that treason might be crushed, and traitors punished; that the time might speedily come when our dear old flag should wave over every village, town, and city of the United States, and we enjoy peace again. When the prayer was finished Captain Tabb withdrew from the crowd saying, "d——n smart prayer, but I don't believe it will amount to anything."

Many attempts to escape were planned, but few were successful. Major Pasco was caught tunneling, and the officer in command ordered him to fill up the tunnel. A revolver was held menacingly at his breast; but he resolutely refused. He was taken from prison and threatened with hanging, but was finally recommitted. On the 4th of July, the rebels gave us four roll-calls in the morning. An officer hoisted a small United States flag, which we all cheered lustily, much to the chagrin of the rebel guards. Then another sang the Star-Spangled Banner and we cheered that. Afterwards, without any preconcerted arrangement, we went into a large building, and held a meeting. Chaplain Dixon made one of the most patriotic prayers we ever heard. Then earnest, off-hand speeches were made, filled with a determination to persevere until the Rebellion should be crushed. Lieutenant-Colonel Thorp, 1st N.Y. Dragoons, was particularly defiant, and the audience showed their appreciation of it by frequent and [80] prolonged applause. Of course such proceedings could not be tolerated by our rebel commandant, and he sent in his officer of the day to break up the meeting. The crowd quietly dispersed, after giving three rousing cheers each for President Lincoln and the little flag, the Proclamation, Grant, and Sherman. To us it was a very satisfactory celebration. In the course of the afternoon the following order was posted on the bulletin-board:

SPECIAL ORDERS NO. 6.

C.S. MILITARY PRISON, }
MACON, GA., July 4th, 1864, }

"I. Lieutenant-Colonel Thorp is relieved from duty as senior officer of prisoners for a violation of prison rules, and Lieutenant-Colonel McCrary will again assume that position.

"II. The same order and quiet will be observed on this day as on any other.

"III. A disregard of this order may subject offenders to unpleasant consequences.

"GEO. C. GIBBS, Captain Commanding."

After the meeting was over, Colonel Thorp was called out to headquarters, when the following conversation took place between Captain Gibbs and himself:

G.—"What's your name?"

Col.—"T.J. Thorp."

G.—"Were you addressing the officers in the prison?"

Col.—"I was."

G.—"What did you mean by it?"

Col.—"It was the desire of the officers that I should address them the custom in our country on the 4th of July."

G.—"*Sir*, I shall put you in *irons*, and send you to jail."

Col.—"Very well, you can do so; but such treatment will r feelings toward you or the Confederacy in the least. We deem it n but a duty, to commemorate the 4th of July as the birth-day of whose defense and perpetuity we are willing to *suffer*, and *die*, if ne

At this the Captain commuted his verdict to solitary confinen *irons*; but, before the guard arrived, the order was entirely rev Thorp was sent back inside the stockade, with threats of summ persisted in addressing the officers again on *any subject*.

SAVANNAH—CHARLESTON.

On July 28th, the first division of prisoners went to Charleston. This took of the 16th, Major Pasco, Quartermaster Robins, Captains Morse, Robinson, Burke, Hintz, and Lieutenant Bruns. The next day 600 more left for Savannah. In this squad all the remaining officers of the 16th went, they being Chaplain Dixon, Adjutant Clapp, Captain Turner, Lieutenants A.G. Case, Bowers, Strong, Andrus, Miller, Waters, Landon, and Blakeslee. On our way we busied ourselves by pitching the guards out of the cars when under full headway. Arriving at Savannah we were received by a large

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Col.—"It was the desire of the officers that I should address them, *which I did*, as is the custom in our country on the 4th of July."

G.—"*Sir*, I shall put you in *irons*, and send you to jail." [81]

Col.—"Very well, you can do so; but such treatment will not ameliorate my feelings toward you or the Confederacy in the least. We deem it not only a privilege, but a duty, to commemorate the 4th of July as the birth-day of a great nation, for whose defense and perpetuity we are willing to *suffer*, and *die*, if need be."

At this the Captain commuted his verdict to solitary confinement in jail *without irons*; but, before the guard arrived, the order was entirely revoked, and Colonel Thorp was sent back inside the stockade, with threats of summary treatment if he persisted in addressing the officers again on *any subject*.

SAVANNAH—CHARLESTON.

On July 28th, the first division of prisoners went to Charleston. This took of the 16th, Major Pasco, Quartermaster Robins, Captains Morse, Robinson, Burke, Hintz, and Lieutenant Bruns. The next day 600 more left for Savannah. In this squad all the remaining officers of the 16th went, they being Chaplain Dixon, Adjutant Clapp, Captain Turner, Lieutenants A.G. Case, Bowers, Strong, Andrus, Miller, Waters, Landon, and Blakeslee. On our way we busied ourselves by pitching the guards out of the cars when under full headway. Arriving at Savannah we were received by a large

delegation of citizens, who were greatly interested, and wondered where our horns and tails were. Great was their surprise that we did not look different from their soldiers. The crowd was very great, and the police, aided by the city militia, could [82] hardly clear the way for us to march through the streets. The officer in charge also was greatly confused, and gave so many wrong orders that it was a long time before we were able to march to the old United States Marine Hospital. We were confined in the yard surrounded on three sides by a brick wall eight feet high. While at this prison Lieutenant John M. Waters was taken sick with bilious fever. After a sickness of two weeks he was taken into the hospital on August 17th, dying the next day at 11 A.M. On the 19th, Chaplain Dixon was allowed to go out and perform the last duty of respect to our comrade in the presence of the Commander of the prison, Officer of the Day, Officer of the Guard, two Lieutenants, and four privates. Lieutenant Waters was very genial and, until his sickness, had kept up good courage. On September 2d, the Chaplains and Surgeons were sent to Charleston to be exchanged. This took Chaplain Dixon and Assistant Surgeon Nickerson of the 16th.

At an early hour on the morning of September 13th, we left Savannah and went to Charleston, where we were enthusiastically received and thrown into the yard of the jail. We here found Edward Woodford of Company I, who gave us some of the casualties of the enlisted men at Andersonville. He reported that the regiment stood it better than the other regiments who were captured at Plymouth, but already sixty had died. Two days after our arrival, Major Pasco, who was on parole at Roper hospital, (together with the balance of the 16th officers who left Macon in the first division, [83] July 28th,) visited us, and through his efforts three days after, we joined him at Roper Hospital, by signing the following parole.

CHARLESTON, S.C., C.S. AMERICA,
SEPTEMBER, 1864.

"We, the undersigned, prisoners of war, confined in the city of Charleston, in the Confederate States of America, do pledge our parole individually as military men and men of honor, that we will not attempt to pass the lines which shall be established and guarded around our prison house; nor will we, by letter, word, or sign, hold any intercourse with parties beyond those lines, nor with those who may visit us, without authority. It is understood by us, that this parole is voluntary on our part, and given in consideration of privileges secured to us, by lessening the stringency of the guard, of free ingress and egress of the house and appointed grounds during the day, by which we secure a liberty of fresh air and exercise, grateful to comfort and health.

"Hereby we admit that this, our parole, binds us in letter and spirit, with no room for doubts or technicality of construction, and its violation will be an act of lasting disgrace. Signed:"

The firing upon the city was continued daily notwithstanding our being brought here and placed under fire of our own batteries as a means of saving the besieged city. Cheer after cheer went up as we heard the missiles crash through adjacent buildings.

On September 17th, at 1 P.M., a fire broke out near us. General Foster immediately opened on the place, the fourth shell bursting in a dwelling house near by, setting that also on fire. So accurate were Gilmore's guns aimed that two shells burst in the

burning buildings; and the negroes told us that one struck an engine, entirely destroying it, and killing several firemen. One shell struck our wall, tearing it nearly down. Several pieces of shell came into the yard where we were, but no one was injured. One of our officers in Roper Hospital was wounded in the arm by a piece of [84] shell that came through the roof while he was eating dinner, making a flesh wound, smashing up the table, and passing on through the floor. In the evening we often watched the shells coming, and it was a beautiful sight. We first caught the flash of our guns; then, after waiting a few seconds, we could see the missile, which looked like a shooting star, climbing up higher and higher; and, when it reached its full hight, we could hear the report of the guns that sent it; by this time the shell was so near, that we could hear its sharp, shrill shriek; then it gradually descended, and approached until it was right over our heads, when it burst, most of the pieces going beyond us. The report of the explosion then reached us, as we heard the fragments rattle among the brick walls, or crash fearfully through the wooden tenements. Shells from Gilmore's batteries on Morris Island were continually making sad havoc in the city, killing and wounding from one to eight persons daily, and going through entire blocks. Sometimes a single percussion shell would blow up an entire building.

On October 2d, Major Pasco received a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Burnham, stating that he was once more a prisoner of war and confined at Wilmington. This was news that very much surprised us. It seems that after being exchanged at Charleston, he had been home and had got newly fitted out, and was on his way to the regiment. At this time Co. "H" and a few others of the regiment which had been gathered from different points were stationed at Roanoke Island, and this composed the 16th Connecticut Volunteers, on the Union side of the lines. Lieutenant Colonel Burnham [85] took the steamer "Fawn" at Norfolk, and while passing Coinjock, on the Albemarle and Chesapeake canal, they were fired into by guerrillas, who lay concealed near the shore. One was killed outright and several wounded. The remainder were taken prisoners, and the steamer was burned. The prisoners were marched to Elizabeth City, and turned over to the rebel authorities. Colonel Burnham was soon after again paroled.

COLUMBIA.

On October 5th, we went to Columbia. Captains Morse, Burke, and Robinson escaped by jumping from the train, but were recaptured on the 11th, and rejoined us next day at Camp Sorghum.

That we might get wood the commandant allowed a certain number to be paroled each day. Their names were written on a piece of paper, handed to the officer of the day, who instructed the guard to pass them in and out at their pleasure till night. On the 3d of November, Captains Robinson, Dickerson, and Burke, took advantage of this, and successfully escaped, an account of which has been written by Captain Dickerson as follows:

"Upon the evening of the 3d of November, 1864, a large number of officers were paroled for the purpose of bringing wood for cooking and building purposes. Three of us,—Captains Burke, Robinson, and myself—finished getting wood, saw our paroles destroyed, returned to camp, and, after a short time, recrossed the guard-line, and,

unsuspected, made our way to the woods. We kept slowly through the woods, until we were safely beyond the reach of the rebels. Night coming on, we traveled through the fields and woods, until we struck a road which ran parallel with the Congaree River; and traveled southward about twelve miles. We then left the public road, and traveled through the woods, toward the river, which was about eight miles distant. Upon the afternoon of the 4th, we fell in with five other of our escaped prisoners from the same camp, who escaped two nights previous to ourselves by bribing the guard. They had been in the swamp two days, and had made an arrangement with the negroes for provisions, and information where two boats could be found. We joined our parties, and in the evening the negroes met us, and furnished us with the promised necessaries. Proceeding to the river, which was about two miles distant, we found the boats which accommodated all of us. At about eleven o'clock, all things being ready we embarked in our boats, and paddled down the river. Early in the morning, we landed, having secured a hiding-place for our boats and ourselves, and devoted the day to cooking and sleep. Darkness again found us upon the river; and we soon passed the bridge of the South Carolina railroad, which was guarded by sentries; paddled all night; and again secured ourselves for the day. [86]

"While engaged, some in cooking, others in sleep, our attention was attracted by loud talking; and soon we discovered a boat below us, upon the river, being poled up the river by negroes. One of our party posted himself upon the bank of the river, where he could hail the boat without discovering the presence of the rest of the party, and, hailing the negro in charge of the boat, informed him that he was in want of provisions. The negro replied that he had no time to stop, and persisted in keeping on his course. When all entreaty failed, the captain told him he was a 'Yankee' officer, escaped from rebel prison, making his way north and needed provisions, and information regarding obstructions in the river. The negro no sooner learned his true character than he immediately landed, secured his boat, staid with us all day, cooking rations, and giving very valuable information. He claimed in return for his service, a sight of the rest of the party, whom he had instinctive shrewdness to know were concealed close by. Night again found us upon the river; and after a few hours' sail we landed at a farm, of which we had been informed by the negroes, where we succeeded in capturing a goat, which supplied us with meat to our journey's end. [87]

"Monday and Tuesday nights nothing occurred to delay our progress toward the desired goal. Wednesday evening, we had been going down the river but a short time, when we reached a ferry, where we made the acquaintance of four negroes, who furnished us with a large quantity of sweet-potatoes, salt, and meat. Upon parting with them, they bade us God-speed and a safe journey. Elated and happy with our success, we kept steadily forward; and soon after we landed to again consult the negroes, who told us we were but five miles from a battery, mounting two pieces, upon the right bank of the river, guarded by rebel soldiers. After receiving other information and provisions, we parted company with the last of our negro friends, and proceeded down the river, passed the battery in safety, and, landing, waited for the darkness of the night to finish our journey to the coast. Thursday night, full of hope, we again took to our boats, and meeting no interference, reached the coast safely. [88]

"The light of Friday morning, November 11th, revealed to us the spars of a ship, which we soon made out to be one of the United States blockade. It was the Canandaigua, Captain Harrison; and after sundry attempts we succeeded in getting safe on board, under the protection of the star-spangled banner. We came north on the

Fulton."

Of the many devices for escape, all were not as successful as the above, as our major will testify.

Major Pasco had become possessed of two gold dollars which had been sent him in cans of solidified milk from the north. He had bribed a guard to permit Captains Morse, Turner, and himself, to pass out that evening between the hours of eight and ten, for the two gold dollars and a jack knife. At the appointed time, and all three officers being ready, they approached the dead line, and Captain Morse going first gave the booty to the guard who allowed him to pass and also Captain Turner. At this point an officer who was lying on the ground and trying to escape on his own hook in another manner, jumped up and passed out. The guard had passed out three according to agreement. Major Pasco came along and was halted by the guard, and the following conversation took place:

Major. You agreed to pass out three of us.

Guard. Well I have let out three. You must go back.

Major. That last man you let pass didn't belong to my party. [89]

Guard. Can't help it, I have let out three and you must go back.

The Major undertook to explain matters, but the sentinels along the line commenced to fire at him and he beat a hasty retreat into camp, where he dreamed all night of the officer who euchred him out of an escape.

But the Major was not to be foiled out of a successful escape. He made a second attempt to reach the Union lines by writing out a false sick certificate to pass to the hospital, but he was recaptured after seven days absence. The third time he succeeded. Shortly after the train left Columbia, while we were going to Charlotte, N.C., he jumped off the train and was overtaken by Sherman's army. Lieutenant Bruns also escaped from this prison, but was recaptured and brought back after an absence of ten days. Captains Morse and Turner were returned to prison, having been absent a month. There were so many escapes from this prison that on the 12th of December, the rebels marched us into the city and confined us in the yard of the Insane Asylum with a brick wall around it eight or ten feet high, and eighteen inches thick.

CHARLOTTE, RALEIGH, GOLDSBORO, WILMINGTON.

The month of February was full of rumors in regard to our exchange, but it was an old story to us given out to prevent our trying to escape. On the 14th and 15th we were moved to Charlotte. General Sherman had by this time arrived within two miles of the city and was posting his artillery on the hill, (Camp Sorghum[3]) where we had [90] been imprisoned a few weeks before.

As the train started. General Sherman opened his batteries on the city. Lieutenant Landon and a party of sixteen had managed to hide themselves between the rafters under the floor of the second story of the Hospital building, where they stayed with little or no food for forty-eight hours and fell into the hands of Sherman. Major Pasco, Captains Morse and Turner, who jumped from the first train that left Columbia,

secreted themselves in the woods and General Sherman overtook them on his way north. The remaining officers of the 16th were sent to Charlotte with the rest of the prisoners, arriving there on the evening of the 16th, having been delayed some hours at a point 40 miles from Columbia by running into a drove of cattle which the rebels were driving ahead of Sherman's course. The engine, tender, and one car was thrown from the track, killing three beef creatures. This was issued to us, being the first meat of any kind that we had tasted for four months and ten days.

Disembarking from the cars on the morning of the 17th, we marched three-quarters of a mile to a little pine grove, which we called Camp Necessity or Camp Bacon, by reason of some bacon having been issued,—the only meat rations for over four months. The fact that we were soon to be exchanged was now confirmed by the rebels taking off part of the guard and allowing them to use unloaded muskets. Still[4] "old [91]
fish" turned away and would not believe it, and a good many escaped, as it was a very easy matter. Captain Hintz and Lieutenant Bruns immediately left, and Lieutenant Johnson with Lieutenant Eli P. Alexander, (Co. H. 26th Mich.,) went out about noon, and nothing has ever been heard from them. It is supposed that they were murdered by guerrillas. On the 20th, we signed a parole not to serve against the Confederate States until regularly exchanged, and that evening we left for Raleigh, where we stayed a few days and thence proceeded to Goldsboro, where we were quartered in the Court House. On the 27th we signed the following parole.

> We, the undersigned, prisoners of war, do give our Parole of Honor, that we will not take up arms again, nor serve as Military Police or Constabulary force in any fort, garrison, or fieldwork, nor as guards of prisoners, depots or stores, nor to discharge any duty usually performed by soldiers: until exchanged under the provisions of the cartel entered into July 22d, 1862.

About six o'clock in the evening of the 28th, we left Goldsboro by cars crowded both in and outside, amid cheers and songs, bound for Wilmington, which was now in our possession. Riding all night, daylight found us standing on the track at Rocky [92]
Point, a few miles from Northeast Bridge, and fourteen miles from Wilmington. This was the picket line and out-post of the rebels. At nine o'clock Colonel Hatch on a special train arrived and proceeded ahead with a flag of truce on the engine. We soon started and reached neutral ground about ten o'clock. About a mile past Marlboro, we came in sight of the "Boys in Blue." Three cheers were immediately given. As the train came to a stand still, all were silent, and we quietly disembarked and were counted through the ranks of twenty Union soldiers, they presenting arms. As soon as we were able clearly to comprehend that there was not somebody at our side with a loaded musket, cheer upon cheer was given, caps were thrown high in the air, some were hugging and kissing each other, and others cried. Whilst some sang, others were laughing and rolling on the ground. Finally our old pans, kettles, bags of meal, and bundles of all sorts were flung high in the air. Cheer upon cheer was given for Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, and *General Exchange*. Some hugged the horse of a Colonel, who seemed to have command over us, but tried in vain to get us into line. Taking up the line of march, a mile brought us to Cape Fear River, and in sight of the United States flag. Cheer after cheer ran the whole length of the line. The 6th Connecticut was encamped on the bank of the river, and at the end of the pontoon bridge which we had to cross, they had erected a handsome arbor decked with flags.

In the center of the arch, surrounded with a wreath of evergreens, were the words

"WELCOME, BROTHERS."

A band was placed here, and played "Hail to the Chief who in Triumph Advances." [93] Some few cheered but more were moved to tears, and kissed that dear old flag which they had so long suffered for, and all marched under with uncovered heads. Arriving at the top of the hill, we found the whole division of troops in line to receive us. On reaching camp we partook of a breakfast of United States rations, the first full meal which we had had for a long time. At noon those that were able walked to Wilmington, a distance of nine miles. We were here met by officers who provided us with another meal, and then we were quartered in churches and private residences. The next day (March 2d,) we took the steamer "General Sedgwick" for Annapolis, Md., where we remained a week, receiving two months pay and a leave of absence for 30 days, at the end of which time we were to report at Camp Parole, Annapolis, Md.

Extracts from a statement made in 1867 by Lieut. B.F. Blakeslee, to a "Congressional Committee on the Treatment of Prisoners of War and Union Citizens;" John P.C. Shanks of Indiana, Chairman.

> At Macon, for quarters we had merely a roof which sheltered us from rain; but no protection from the cold damp nights. Rations consisted per diem of a pint to a pint and a half of corn-meal; from poor to fair in quality, and occasionally in lieu thereof baked corn-bread from one to two inches thick, three inches long and three inches in width, containing a large quantity of water and very hard; rice half a tea-cupful, or in lieu thereof the same quantity of beans; salt, a teaspoonful; bacon, from three to four ounces; invariably decayed and maggoty, with only two exceptions, two issues of soap were made and that was the end of trying to keep clean; meat of any kind except the bacon above mentioned we never saw. No cooking utensils were issued. The rations of wood were not sufficient to do our cooking. From the 11th to the 18th of July, none whatever was issued, and rations had to be eaten raw.
>
> This caused much hunger, suffering, and misery, as the beans and rice [94] could not be eaten. The quality of the water in this prison was good and usually plenty, though some days the supply was short. Our treatment here was generally bad. The length of confinement was three months.
>
> At Savannah we were better treated in every respect than in any other prison, provided with tents, and cooking utensils, and a good supply of rations of good quality. Fresh beef was issued nearly every day. The water though, was very poor; having a fetid smell, and unpleasant taste, and could only be used for drinking purposes by filtering through charcoal; or burnt rice or meal steeped in it. The length of confinement was six weeks.
>
> At Charleston Jail Yard, only a part were provided with shelter; and in rainy weather the yard was flooded with water, so we could neither lie down nor do any cooking. In pleasant weather, it was as hot as an oven. Little or no fresh air could come within those walls which were twelve feet high, and in addition surrounded by buildings. When there was a breeze, there were whirlwinds of dust which would almost suffocate us. The water was very poor, making a great many sick. The rations consisted of small quantities of corn-meal and rice, and one ounce of bacon per day; but after a week or so

the bacon was dispensed with. There were no utensils for cooking, and but little salt was issued. In addition to our deplorable condition we were under fire from Gilmore's batteries, whose shells were continually bursting around us, occasionally coming amongst us and twice tearing the wall away. On one occasion for sixty hours we had not a morsel to eat.

At Roper Hospital Prison, in Charleston, our exact rations were for ten days, two and a third quarts of corn-meal, two quarts of rice, three pints of black beans (including bugs,) and four ounces (daily) of fresh beef, or in lieu thereof, two ounces of bacon. No cooking utensils were to be had. We certainly should have starved to death here, had it not been for an arrangement made for obtaining money which enabled us to purchase food of the citizens. The authorities gave us Confederate money in exchange for our drafts (in gold) on the North.

At Columbia we were turned into an open field like a drove of cattle to pass the winter months, without any shelter whatever, neither cooking utensils, axes, spades or anything were issued that would enable us to make ourselves comfortable. With scanty clothing, but few blankets, some without shoes, we were left here to pass the winter as best we could. Rations consisted of corn-meal and rice. Twelve days rations of rice made one meal. Salt was issued in small quantities, and for four consecutive days we had none at all. On September 26th and 27th, we had nothing to eat. One or two issues of flour were made, but no meat of any kind was provided. [95]

While on our way to Charlotte, the train ran into a drove of cattle, killing three, which were issued to us, making the only meat rations we had had for four months and ten days. At Raleigh we met several trains loaded with enlisted men going north to be paroled. Nearly all were sick and very dirty and black; no soap having been issued to them for six months. Nineteen out of one train had died since leaving Salisbury, a distance of 132 miles, mostly of starvation, though some who were on the top of the cars were frozen to death. On Monday morning they had half a loaf of bread, weighing not over five ounces issued to them, since which time the rebels had issued *not a particle of food*. It was then Thursday noon. How soon thereafter rations were issued to them I am unable to state.

FOOTNOTES:

[3] So named, because that was the principal ration we received while there.

[4] The first six months of prison life one is called a "fresh fish," the next four months a "sucker," the next two a "dry cod," and the balance of his time a "dried herring," or "old fish." After exchange he becomes a "pickled sardine."

As soon as a new prisoner made his appearance at the gate, the cry of "fresh-fish," by each one ran through the prison, and a general rush was made for the gate. An eager group surrounded him, and while some would be seriously

asking questions concerning his capture and listening to his pitiful story others would call out "Take your hands out of his haversack;" "Give him air;" "Keep that louse off him;" "Don't take his clothes;" etc. All this affected them strangely at first, and produced a hearty laugh for us.

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[96]

CHAPTER VIII.

ToC

PRISON LIFE OF THE ENLISTED MEN.

It is to the credit of the rebel soldiers whose good fortune it was to capture our command, that we were treated with considerable courtesy and kindness while in their power. Our men were allowed to retain their blankets and overcoats, and all little articles of value which they might have upon their persons. Many of the men had about them large sums of money which they were allowed to keep. From Plymouth, the long and wearisome march made to Tarboro (an account of which is given in the preceding chapter,) together with scanty rations and exposure, told severely on the men, and many were sick and feeble; and it was with no little pleasure that, on the morning of April 29th, they marched to the depot in the town to take cars to Camp Sumter, where, as the rebels informed them, rations would be dealt out plenteously. They were crowded aboard small box cars by forties, and, in addition, six rebel guards were stationed in each car, occupying the door. Of course under such circumstances, they were nearly suffocated, and were pressed almost out of shape. The train started at 10 o'clock, stopping at Goldsboro, where rations were issued, consisting of three small hard crackers and a little scrap of bacon, to subsist on for the next twenty-four hours. Although arriving at midnight at Wilmington, they were not allowed to get out of the [97] wretched cars until morning. At sunrise they were marched down to the dock, and conveyed by ferry boats to the opposite side. Taking the train in waiting for them, they proceeded to Charleston, arriving there on Sunday morning, May 1st. In the afternoon they were transferred to another train and put aboard platform cars and at a rapid rate went to Savannah, Georgia. But before reaching there they were overtaken by a storm and thoroughly drenched with rain. Changing cars at Savannah, they proceeded to Macon, and thence to Andersonville, arriving there at nine in the evening. Leaving the cars they were marched into an open field near by, where they remained during the night, and marched into the prison pen the next morning under the escort of a strong guard. How each one felt as he entered this "hell upon earth," can little be imagined. The first night ten died near the position of the 16th. The men seemed to stand it pretty well at first, much better than the other regiments captured at Plymouth, and it was not until the 20th of June that the first of their number died, Alonzo A. Bosworth, Co. D. But by the 1st of August, some of the Sixteenth died nearly every day.

The inhuman treatment which our men experienced in Southern Prisons has been told over and over, and is well known in history and need not be repeated; but this history would not be complete without inserting the following testimony of rebel barbarity taken from the diary of Corporal Charles G. Lee, (Co. B.,) who died from exposure and lack of food, immediately after being exchanged at Wilmington, N.C. He writes as follows, "Again I am called to bid adieu to the passing year, but under [98] very different circumstances from any in which I have ever been. During the year 1864, I have passed eight months in the most degrading imprisonment. In that time, our inhuman captors had not furnished shelter of any kind; and we have repeatedly been for two and three days at a time without a morsel of food; and even that we have received would at home have been generally thought unfit for swine. We have not had a particle of meat for forty-two days, and but little molasses, or any thing to take the place of it. Our rations chiefly consist of about a pint and a half of coarse corn-meal, and half a teaspoonful of salt daily. Now and then we receive a few beans or sweet potatoes. Many a night have I lain awake because I was so hungry that I could not sleep."

About the 1st of September the prisoners were removed to Charleston, South Carolina, where they remained about four weeks, when the yellow fever broke out and raged so fearfully among the rebel forces who guarded the prisoners, that they were removed to Florence, where they spent the winter months. During the latter part of December, 1864, and the months of January and February, 1865, the men were—a few at a time—paroled and allowed to come north, and afterwards were regularly exchanged, thus ending the career of the Sixteenth in prison, with the heavy loss of over fifty per cent. in deaths, in a period of a few months. A more detailed account has been published by Sergeant Major Robert H. Kellogg, in his "Life and Death in Rebel Prisons." Among the number who escaped from prison, were Quartermaster [99] Sergeant Hiram Buckingham and Andrew J. Spring, of Company K. An order was received for the names of all sailors at Andersonville. Sergeant Buckingham suspecting it was for the purpose of exchange, obtained a suit of sailor's clothes, and accordingly took the name of Johnny Sullivan, a sailor who had died in the hospital a few months before. In about a week after the names had been registered, the sailors were ordered out of prison. Buckingham answering "Here," to the name of Johnny Sullivan, passed out without detection. They went to Charleston, thence to Richmond, and were exchanged, having been in prison just six months.

Andrew J. Spring in some manner procured money enough to bribe a guard, who allowed him to escape with two comrades. They were five days in reaching the Union lines, living meanwhile on sugar-cane, green corn, and persimmons. Traveling in the woods, they guided themselves by the moss, which grows heaviest on the north side of the trees, and successfully passed three lines of rebel pickets.

The shooting of prisoners who came near the "dead line," was of almost daily occurrence; for if they were near it with no intention of escaping, the sentinels would fire. The regiment lost one man in this manner, William Drake of Company A, who was shot December 4th, 1864.

[100]

CHAPTER IX.

ToC

1865.

NEW BERNE,—HARTFORD, CONN.

Company "H," (Captain Barnum,) who escaped capture at Plymouth, by being detached and sent to Roanoke Island for duty in April, 1864, was reinforced now and then by men who had previously been detached for special service, or were absent sick, also by a few who were exchanged from time to time, representing every company, and this composed the 16th regiment in actual service. Captain Barnum labored with much zeal under many difficulties, to preserve the former prestige of the regiment. During December the regiment proceeded to Plymouth, and went thence on an expedition to Poster's Mills, about ten miles, destroying the mills and a large quantity of grain, and returning with various spoils. On another occasion the regiment went to Hertford, where they captured large quantities of cotton, tobacco, finished carriages, and buggies, several thousand feet of lumber, several mules, and forty contrabands. And again one bright night Captain Pomeroy with sixty men proceeded by steamer up the Alligator river, capturing a barge and three small sail vessels containing twenty-five hundred bushels of shelled corn, together with the outfit of fifteen men with their mules and carts. They were intending to take the corn to a mill near by to be ground. The regiment also made several unimportant raids to Columbia, [101]
Edenton, and the adjoining country, until March 4th, 1865, when they were ordered to New Berne, N.C., where the exchanged prisoners joined them and remained on provost duty. Most of the officers were quartered in the houses at the corner of Craven and Union streets. Colonel Beach having been released from Libby Prison in May, 1864, was assigned to various duties in Washington, only once rejoining what remained of the regiment. That was at New Berne, where he was taken sick and soon departed on sick-leave.

Colonel Frank Beach was a graduate of West Point Academy, class '57. He was stationed at first at Fortress Monroe, as a brevet second lieutenant of artillery.

At a later date he was ordered to the far west with General Gibbon, and took part in the well-known Utah expedition in 1858. The sufferings of that campaign and the winter encampment on the prairie were shared by him, as well as the almost unendurable *ennui* of later days, when Digger Indians or inimical Mormons were the only society accessible to the small garrison.

When the war broke out Colonel Beach was post adjutant at Port McHenry near Baltimore, and remained in that position for some time. He took some share in McClellan's advance, and was stationed at Yorktown as an officer of artillery. But in the summer of 1862, he was permitted, by special order of the war department, to accept the colonelcy of the Sixteenth Connecticut regiment which had been tendered him by Governor Buckingham. He commanded the regiment at the battle of Antietam, [102]

showing great personal bravery and heroism during the engagement. He galloped hither and thither on his white horse over the field, trying in vain to draw the men out of the desperate charge into which they had been ordered, and sad and full of woe was his heart on the night after the struggle, when the broken remnants of the Sixteenth gathered around him in the rear of the battle ground. He made personal inquiry after each of the wounded, and visited a number of them on that evening and the following days, doing for them all that was possible.

The winter which followed made him an invalid with a disease whose seeds had been laid in the Utah campaign. But, as he was reluctant to leave the regiment, he accompanied it in an ambulance on the long marches down Virginia to Fredericksburg. With him, and sharing the same ambulance, was Colonel Griffin Stedman, the heroic commander of the Eleventh Connecticut, still lame from Antietam wounds. They became firm friends, and not unfrequently in those cold evenings the ambulance would harbor a merry party, which, by the light of a hospital lantern, and in the sight of the surrounding camp fires, would speed the long hours by merry conversation. Major Converse, Adjutant Barnum, (both fallen) and Dr. Mayer would bear them company.

The greater part of that winter the Colonel remained with the regiment, but was finally forced to take sick leave. He returned to it in the summer at Portsmouth, Va., and held command during the siege of Suffolk, and the charge on Longstreet's army. Then he conducted it to North Carolina, where he remained in command of a brigade, [103] until at Plymouth, he was taken prisoner with the regiment and all the other troops that garrisoned this surprised out-post.

After the war Colonel Beach was for some time in command of a solitary fort near Washington. He was soon after stationed at Washington, and then at Fort McHenry. His old trouble having reappeared with more than its former violence and persistency, he was placed on the retired list, and endeavored to regain his health, but with only temporary success. He died at New York, in the New York hotel, on Wednesday evening, February 5th, 1873.

Colonel Beach was a gentleman of very handsome appearance and strong masculinity of deportment. He was widely and well read, and as thoroughly acquainted with the progress of modern philosophy and science as with the prominent poets and writers of *belles lettres* of all ages. He had an elegant yet terse method of expression, and a flashing quality of wit. But no man was of kinder heart, and in the regular army his good nature had become proverbial. In his first connection with the Sixteenth Connecticut Regiment under unfortunate circumstances, many misunderstandings between him and the men gained ground. This, as in some other regiments, was owing to the jealousy with which the volunteer soldiers, fresh from home, regarded regular army officers, and to the disagreeable impression the necessities of army discipline made on them. But, a little later, and at the close of the war, there was not a man of the regiment who was not warmly attached to the Colonel, admired him, was proud of his bravery, his military knowledge, bearing, and [104] of his standing in the army. "Little Moustache," and "Black Eye," the men used to call him among themselves, and they made a boast of him to those of other regiments. He was as splendidly endowed with all the qualities that make the true and noble man, as with all those that please and captivate in society. For years a sufferer from a harassing disease, yet few came in personal contact with him but will regret his

demise as that of a person of fine and polished intellect, and engaging manners, and of a great-hearted gentleman.

Surgeon Mayer who was exchanged in May, 1864, was ordered to the Foster General Hospital at New Berne, N.C. There he remained in charge of four wards until the latter part of September, when the Chief Surgeon of the hospital went north, and he succeeded to the charge of the institution. Immediately afterwards the yellow fever broke out. Its ravages in the city of New Berne and among the garrison are a matter of general history. There were only a few of the Sixteenth at New Berne at the time, and most of these had been detailed as clerks or nurses to the hospital, at Surgeon Mayer's suggestion. Jasper A. Winslow, Company "C," who at his own request, through the Surgeon's influence, was ordered there as clerk, took sick at once, and died in a few days. W. Chester Case, Company "H," was doing clerk's duty and proved very efficient at this terrible time. He held out courageously, and kept the reports of the dying, of their places of burial, of their possessions and accounts, until he himself was seized with the fever. When it is considered that sometimes as many as thirty or forty [105] died in one day at the hospital, an idea may be formed in regard to the difficulty and labor of keeping reports. Under Surgeon Mayer's personal treatment Case and a few other Sixteenth men, sick at New Berne, recovered. But at last he took sick himself. For two days it was doubtful whether he would live. Then, some favorable symptoms occurred, and Medical Director Hand sent him to Morehead City. After a two weeks convalescence, he returned to New Berne, where Surgeon Rice and Surgeon Cowgill, who had been in charge since his sickness, lay also attacked by the fever. He took charge again and so continued until his appointment to a different office. During the epidemic, eighteen assistant Surgeons had shared his labors, all of whom had in succession been attacked by the fever, which carried off nine of them.

General Palmer, in recognition of Surgeon Mayer's services, appointed him Medical Purveyor of the district, and this office he held until the muster out of the regiment. A complimentary order was issued to him. His management of the hospital during the yellow fever time, and his administration of the Medical Purveyor's department, met with general praise.

The Doctor says: "I got out of the hospital where over five hundred died, and had saved seventy patients above the general average; and I got out of the Medical Purveyor's office, where I had some million dollars worth of property to administer and was square with the United States Government, all but fourteen pounds of nails, which I couldn't account for; so I may consider myself fortunate. But the Quartermaster's Department kept writing for those nails every quarter for four or five [106] years."

In May it was generally conceded that the war was ended, and Captains Dickerson and Turner resigned and went home. Adjutant Clapp also resigned while home on leave of absence, and Lieutenant Landon was made Adjutant. June 19th, Major Pasco returned from Connecticut, with the necessary muster rolls and papers to enable us to complete the muster-out rolls. Then both day and night did the officers work on discharge papers and muster-out rolls. Finally on Saturday, June 24th, the rolls were examined and we were honorably mustered out of the service, at 5. P.M., by Captain John D. Parker, A.C.M., Second Massachusetts heavy artillery, the men remarking, while standing in line, waiting patiently; "that while it did not take long to enlist, it took a long time to get mustered out." It proved quite true; for while we enlisted for

three years, it was not supposed that we should be out more than three or six months at the most; and many of the men enlisted expecting to return in a short time, not one of us realizing the hardships and sufferings we must pass through. But who of us regrets the faithful service performed for our country. How many around us to-day do we see who blush and say the greatest mistake they ever made was that they did not go to the war. How many would say as did a prominent man to me, the day we returned home; "I would give fifty thousand dollars to have seen and been through what you have."

The regiment participated in the following [107]

ENGAGEMENTS.

Antietam, Md.—September 17th, 1862. Loss in killed, four commissioned officers, 38 enlisted men; wounded, eight commissioned officers, 176 enlisted men; captured, 12 enlisted men; *Total Loss, 238.*

Fredericksburg, Virginia.—December 12, 13, and 14, 1862. Loss in wounded, one enlisted man. *Total loss one.*

Edenton Road, Suffolk, Virginia.—April 24, 1863. Loss in killed, one enlisted man; wounded, seven enlisted men. *Total loss, eight.*

Providence Church Road, Suffolk, Virginia.—May 3, 1863. Loss in killed, two enlisted men; wounded, one commissioned officer, seven enlisted men. *Total loss, 10.*

Plymouth, North Carolina.—April 20, 1864. Loss in killed, one enlisted man; wounded, one commissioned officer, 11 enlisted men; captured, 23 commissioned officers, 400 enlisted men. *Total loss 436.*

CASUALTIES.

Killed in action,	47
Died of wounds,	45
Died of disease,	73
Died in prison,	177
Shot in prison,	1
Supposed shot while attempting to escape from prison,	1
Lost at sea from burning steamship "General Lyon,"	1
Drowned from accident,	1
Drowned from collision of "Black Diamond," on Potomac river	7
Total deaths,	353
Discharged prior to muster-out of the regiment,	386

Captured at Antietam,	12
Captured at Plymouth,	435
Wounded,	212
Missing,	56
Total Casualties,	1454
The regiment as mustered into service numbered,	1007
Recruits,	75
Officers appointed since first muster,	5
Total,	1087
Number returning home with the regiment,	131

The officers who returned were:
Lieutenant Colonel John H. Burnham, Commanding. [108]
Major Henry L. Pasco.
Surgeon Nathan Mayer.
Quartermaster Gordon Robins, Jr.
Adjutant Herbert Landon.
Chaplain Charles Dixon.
Captains C.W. Morse, Henry Hintz, Joseph H. Barnum.
Lieutenants George A. Bowers, A.J. Case, Harmy Bruns and B.F. Blakeslee.

The above list of casualties is far from correct, but is as accurate as can be obtained from the Catalogue of Connecticut Soldiers, issued by the Adjutant General of the state, with some additions well known by surviving members. The casualties were greater rather than less, than the figures given above. The number given as killed, are those who were killed outright; but it is generally believed that a greater number died from wounds than the regiment has been credited with, for within forty-eight hours after the battle of Antietam, nine died from wounds; and out of the seven wounded at the fight on Providence Church road at Suffolk, three died. It is therefore safe to say that forty-five is too low a number of deaths out of 212 wounded. It is also believed that more than twelve were captured at the battle of Antietam. There is also no doubt that the regiment lost at least *two hundred and twenty*, by death from rebel cruelties and starvation. Eighteen can be counted who died immediately after arriving at Wilmington and Annapolis from southern prisons.

The Sixteenth was always called an *unfortunate regiment*; for if there was any special hardship to endure, the regiment was sure to be called on to experience it, [109] either by accident or otherwise. It was our bad luck.

The list of casualties show in how many ways the men were lost. Some of the men and two of the officers never could be accounted for. Lieutenant George Johnson, who escaped from prison at Charlotte, has never been heard from. It is supposed that he was shot by guerrillas, who infested the locality in which he said he was going to reach the Union lines. Lieut. William H. Miller was last seen at Washington on his way to the regiment after having been exchanged. It is supposed that he was taken sick and died in the hospital. Elbert Sutleff, Co. K, was lost at sea by the burning of

the steamship "General Lyon." Quite a number of the men who were returning to the regiment after captivity, were on a steamer going down the Potomac river in the night when the boat collided with the "Black Diamond." All the passengers jumped aboard the Diamond, which went down, and the regiment lost seven men. Some of the saved remained in the water three or four hours.

On Sunday, June 25th, the regiment proceeded to Morehead City, and embarked on the steam transport "General Meigs," with the 23d Massachusetts Regiment, and the Connecticut Brigade Band, which, learning that we were mustered out and on our way home, had obtained an order from General Palmer to be sent home under charge of Lieutenant Colonel Burnham. The sea being rough we did not leave till the next morning. We arrived at New York late on the afternoon of the 28th. Taking on some rations we proceeded to New Haven, arriving there at an early hour in the morning. [110] Procuring special transportation, we reached Hartford at eight o'clock. Being a Hartford regiment, the citizens had made extensive arrangements to welcome us, but the 18th Connecticut had arrived that morning by boat and while their attention was drawn towards them, the Sixteenth suddenly entered the Asylum street depot. The news soon reached the State House Square, and the bell was rung, and by the time the regiment was in line the Governor's Guard, City Guard, and Colt's Band were on the "double quick," and thousands of citizens were hurriedly approaching the depot. Many who had seen the regiment leave for the war three years before, and now witnessed the decimated ranks were effected to tears. Those who had husbands, brothers, or relatives in the regiment, watched us eagerly and looked strangely into the ranks, hardly believing that any could be missing. One lady, the wife of an officer, was told for the first time of her husband's death. So great was her grief, that friends who accompanied her could hardly get her into a carriage to convey her home.

From the Hartford Courant, June 30th, 1865.

THE SIXTEENTH.

"Everybody supposed that this gallant regiment would arrive here on the 9.45 regular morning accommodation train from New Haven, but the "boys" being accustomed to making surprises secured special transportation and were in the Asylum street depot by eight o'clock. Here they were received by the Governor's [111] Guard, the City Guard, and Colt's band, and escorted up High to North Main street, down Main to State. On the march, though few in numbers, (but one hundred and thirty enlisted men returning) their tidy and soldierly appearance was the subject of general comment. Being a Hartford regiment there was an unusual interest manifested to see them, and signs of welcome were apparent on every hand. Arriving in front of the United States Hotel, they were drawn up in line, and Governor Buckingham made a brief speech congratulating them on their safe return and extending them cordial greetings on behalf of the State."

Hon. Ezra Hall was then introduced, and welcomed the regiment in behalf of the city in an eloquent manner as follows:

> *Officers and Soldiers of the Sixteenth Connecticut*: Heroes of many a hard-fought battle, and worthy veterans of a redeemed country! On a beautiful

summer day in 1862, when the nation was in its greatest peril, and rebel powers seemed successful for a time in driving back the armies of the Republic, placing in jeopardy all our hopes and every interest of free government, you, more than a thousand strong and valiant men, volunteered to place your names upon the muster-roll among the country's defenders. That roll of honor will go down the centuries and in the far off future the lover of freedom will unroll the scroll, and call your names as among the heroic volunteer force who cemented the *Union* of these States, and proclaimed through the immortal Lincoln, freedom to all mankind. It was hard to leave your situations, your homes, and those you loved. And a sharper pang would steal along your feelings as you thought the step might take you forever from the dear New England hills and all you held dear. But manfully you resolved, and the pensive feelings that evidenced so well your better life, while preparing for the decision, made you braver as you stood on the enemy's grounds, striking for the very homes you left, and the government of your fathers. But the question was decided for country; and you went out from your homes to camp. Hard were your pillows, and the [112] long and weary days went slowly on. Friends gathered to see you in your tents, and to pay you a tender tribute ere you went out to battle. They chatted and counselled with heavy hearts, but asked holy benedictions for your safety and through you for the country. Who of you can forget the stirring emotions of those meetings and partings. For a few days you drilled and disciplined for the coming strife. The order came. You struck your tents—passed down the very streets on which we stand, with colors flying and music measuring out the solemn step of war. No braver regiment ever went out from our city or State. Made up mostly of Hartford men, born and cradled under the very branches of the Charter Oak, we knew well what would be your history, and we watched with pride your firm and steady ranks, as you filed along these streets. As we followed with anxious eye the steamer winding down the Connecticut, bearing its precious freight, with the Stars and Stripes streaming in the wind, we felt a security and an indebtedness, which we now have all come to acknowledge. You went to New York, passed the capital of your country, and in a few days stood on the bloody fields of Antietam. There, in the old Ninth corps, under the faithful Burnside, you first realized war, and stood on the fated field of death. That was a sad day for the 16th Connecticut. Two hundred of your comrades, officers and men, had fallen, and when the shadows of evening closed on that historic day, your hearts, sad and broken, went up in thankfulness to God for your preservation. Well do I remember the sadness that settled over this city, as the news came across the wires that death had cruelly thinned and decimated your ranks, and that among the brave who had fallen were the noble Captains Manross, Drake, Brown, and Barber; but you had only time to bear out the noble two hundred to their sepulture, and to place some humble stone to mark their rest, before you were ordered to the fields of Fredericksburg.

There bravely you stood through three long days of battle. From there you moved to Suffolk, where your ranks were again broken, and the brave Capt. Tennant fell—he who was beloved at home and dear to the Hartford City Guard, of which he was a member, and who followed him with reversed arms and bowed hearts, to yonder church yard where now he sleeps. Peaceful will be his rest, and sacred his memory, for he died for country and humanity. Slowly the days went by as you were garrisoned at Portsmouth,

and long were your marches from Plymouth to New Berne. You will never forget, but will tell over to your children through all the coming years of your lives, how after a long siege by the rebels at Plymouth, nearly your entire regiment was captured, and taken away to rebel prisons at Macon and [113] Andersonville; how of the four hundred and four unfortunate captives who entered Andersonville prisons, more than half were borne out lifeless and cold. My blood chills when I remember that more than two hundred of this regiment were starved and murdered in Southern prisons—imaging more perfectly the hell of secession and the barbarism of Southern institutions and chivalry, than any other page of the war. But you have been preserved to come back to your homes, and to watch again the flag of your country waving over your native city. You well remember how beautiful it looked to you when first you saw its colors after the hour of your deliverance came, and you passed the rebel lines. That flag to-day symbolizes the greatest freedom and the most perfect nationality. "'Tis the banner of all the West," that of a nation now pronounced—

"The heir of all the ages in the foremost files of time."

But your work is done and your history is sealed. In the name of those for whom you fought and who have gathered here to do you honor it is my privilege to say a thousand times welcome home. Your thinned ranks, your torn colors, give convincing proof of your deeds of bravery The state will hang your tattered flag in yonder capitol, and claim with pride your history, and through all the future of the country, her sons will love, respect, and honor you as the brave soldiers who fought in the last great battle for freedom.

But our city has a special interest in your history. You have been led by the honored Col. Beach; and the name of your Lieutenant-Colonel, he who would not leave his regiment for the colonelcy of another, he who has been with you in the camp, in the battle, in the prison and on the march until now, than whom there is none better, or braver on all the veteran roll, his name, John H. Burnham, has long been with us as a household word. Think it not strange that the Hartford City Guard extends a warm and earnest welcome to you, for the names of Burnham, Cheney, Tennant, Pasco, Burke, Lockwood, and Blakeslee, are all ours. As brothers we have watched your history during all these years of war. But while you are privileged to return all covered with honor and glory, and are to go to your homes, to be welcomed by mothers, wives, sisters, and lovers, noble patriotic women, in whose life there dwells the tenderest sentiment for you and country ever unlocked from the starry skies,—while you are to enjoy all this, I cannot forget the brave, devoted boys, comrades in all your trials until death, who will never, never come home again. They died, as you have fought, for country, for the restoration of law and order, for the complete emancipation of a race, for the eternal [114] principle of liberty, and for the final solution of the great problem of self-government. They fell away from home and friends, and most of them rest in Southern graves, but though they fell thus, they died at their posts. History will keep fresh their memories, and write their names on more than granite shaft or marble column.—

After an eventful life and a noble death, they rest well.

"Sleep sweetly, tender hearts, in peace,

Sleep, holy spirits, blessed souls,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll."

The friends of the dead of your regiment are more than of the living, and my heart was sad as I saw the tears start in the eyes of the little child, the tender maiden and the mother with her little ones, as they looked in vain among your passing ranks for their friends. But they will never again watch their returning footsteps, or hear the sweet sound of their voices. No words of mine can heal their wounded hearts. I can only say they have the highest claim upon the nations' gratitude. The noble deeds of their martyred dead will ever live in the archives of the State, and their memories will be embalmed forever in the feelings of the American people.

Thrice welcome then, tried and faithful veterans of the republic. Go bear your honors and your trophies to your homes, and around your own hearths be as great and good as you have been in war.

Breakfast was provided for the regiment at the Trumbull House and United States Hotel, after which a short street parade was had, the City Guard and Colt's band furnishing escort. Arms were then stacked in the armory of the Guard, and the regiment was dismissed, the men being allowed to go to their homes as most of them live in this vicinity, and fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and wives were waiting to extend *their* welcome. Before leaving the armory Colonel Burnham read the following farewell order:

[115]

HEADQUARTERS 16TH CONN. VOLS., INFANTRY,
Hartford, Conn., 29th June, 1865.

General Orders No. 10.

Soldiers of the Sixteenth Connecticut—Glad as I am that the war is over and we are all to rejoin our families and friends again, I cannot repress a feeling of sadness at the thought of severing, perhaps forever, the ties that have bound us together for the last three years. Although a less amount of glory in the field has fallen to our lot than to some others, no regiment from the State has been subjected to so much suffering. Whatever you have been ordered to do, you have done promptly, cheerfully, and well; and whenever in future I am asked of what in all my life I am proudest, I shall always answer "that I belonged to the 16th Connecticut, in the Union army." Placed in charge of the regiment under circumstances that might have made my task a difficult one, it will always be a source of the highest gratification to me to remember that I received the generous support of all, and to the effective co-operation of every officer and the high character of the men, belongs entirely the credit of the fine soldierly appearance and superior military condition in every respect you so soon acquired, and have not failed to maintain to this day. For those gallant comrades who have laid down their lives on the battle-field and in the hospital, and for those heroic men who have endured so much more than death in Southern prisons, let us shed a silent tear and ever cherish their memories tenderly in our hearts.

You are about to go to your homes to enjoy in peace the blessings of the great and good government you have done your share to defend and preserve

to our magnificent country, and I desire that each one of you should take with him my sincere thanks, for the cordial and hearty support you have given me, and the cheerful manner in which you have performed every duty required of you while I have the honor to be your commander. Wishing you every success that you can desire, and trusting you may find in your restored firesides all the comfort and happiness you have so nobly earned, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

JOHN H. BURNHAM,
Lieutenant-Colonel 16th Conn. Vols. Infantry.

On July 8th, the regiment assembled in Hartford, and were paid in full, except the officers who received their pay when returns were made and all property properly accounted for. Thus ended the organization known as the Sixteenth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers. Its record is a credit to the State and an honor to every man who has shared in its fortunes. [116]

Typographical errors corrected in text:

Page 34: seige replaced with siege
Page 41: harrassed replaced with harassed
Page 54: Wessell's replaced with Wessells'
Page 61: Wessels replaced with Wessells
Page 69: 'paced too and fro' replaced with 'paced to and fro'
Page 71: beseiged replaced with besieged
Page 77: atempt replaced with attempt
Page 87: occured replaced with occurred
Page 91: Lieutanant replaced with Lieutenant
Page 98: passsing replaced with passing

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Name and Rank.	Residence.	Date of Enlistment.	Date of Muster in this organization.	Remarks.
Lacey, Michael	Suffield,	Aug. 5,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. June 6, '65.
Laverty, Daniel	Enfield,	July 20,'62	Aug.24,'62	Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. Disc. June 12,'65.
Leavitt, David F.	Suffield,	Aug. 9,'62	Aug.24,'62	M. o. June 24, '65.
Lee, Homer	Suffield,	Aug. 7,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. dis. Nov. 30, '62.
Lester, Charles H.	Enfield,	Aug.11,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Disc. dis. Dec. 19, '62.
Lindow, Henry	Hartford,	Jan. 8,'64	Jan. 8,'64	Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Died July 16, '64, Andersonville, Ga.
Long, George	Suffield,	July 17,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. dis. Dec. 18, '62.
Lord, Roswell C.	Suffield,	July 26,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. dis. Sep. 21, '62.
McCoy, Robert	Enfield,	Aug.18,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. dis. Feb. 6, '63.
McDonald, Patrick	Enfield,	Aug.12,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Disc. dis. Dec. 5, '62.
McNamara, James C.	Enfield,	Aug. 8,'62	Aug.24,'62	Reported absent (sick) at Leesburg, Md., Sep. 11, '62. N. f. r. A. G. O.
Mitchell, William G.	Enfield,	Aug. 7,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Parole not shown. Died Jan. 19, '65.
Muller, George	Enfield,	July 29,'62	Aug.24,'62	Cap'd Apr. 20,'64, Plymouth, N. C. Parole not shown. Died Mch. 18,'65.
Noll, Henry W.	Suffield,	July 19,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Disc. dis. Dec. 3, '62.
Persse, John	Enfield,	July 23,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. M. o. June 24, '65.
Pierce, George J.	Enfield,	July 24,'62	Aug.24,'62	Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Died Oct. 30, '64, Florence, S. C.
Pierce, Dwight	Suffield,	July 21,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Trans. to Co. F, 3d Regt. V. R. C.
Quinnen, Michael	Suffield,	Aug.10,'62	Aug.24,'62	Des. Apr. —,'63. [Re-trans. from V. R. C. Mch. 1, '64. Disc. May 29, '65.
Rhaum, Norman S.	Suffield,	Aug.15,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Trans. to Co. F, 9th Regt. V. R. C. Aug. 29, '63. Pro. Corp. Sep. 22, '63. Disc. June 26, '65.
Riley, John	Enfield,	Aug.11,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Des. July 21, '63.
Ryan, Nicholas	Windsor L'cks,	July 23,'62	Aug.24,'62	Des. Sep. 17, '62. [Winchester, Va. Disc. dis. Dec. 18, '62.
Siggins, William	Suffield,	Aug.12,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. and missing Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Cap'd and par. Sep. 28,'62,
Simons, George E.	Enfield,	Aug.13,'62	Aug.24,'62	Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28,'65. Disc. July 24,'65.
Slater, Isaac	Enfield,	July 21,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. dis. Dec. 29, '62.
Smith, George B.	Suffield,	Aug. 2,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Disc. dis. Jan. 8, '63.
Snow, Orlando E.	Suffield,	July 22,'62	Aug.24,'62	Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Died Nov. 17,'64, Andersonville, Ga.
Snow, Nelson E.	Suffield,	Aug.11,'62	Aug.24,'62	Killed Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md.
Sullivan, Mathew	Enfield,	Aug.15,'62	Aug.24,'62	Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Died Aug. 4, '64, Andersonville, Ga.
Tate, James	Enfield,	Aug. 2,'62	Aug.24,'62	Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. M. o. June 24,'65.
Tate, John	Enfield,	July 26,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Disc. dis. Mch. 18, '63. (See Priv. Co.
Todd, Samuel D.	Suffield,	July 24,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. dis. Dec. 21, '62. [M, 1st C. V. Cav.)
Wardwell, Emerson	Enfield,	July 26,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Died Oct. 17, '62.
Waters, Nathaniel A.	Suffield,	Aug. 2,'62	Aug.24,'62	Des. Sep. 17, '62.
Webster, William	Enfield,	Aug.12,'62	Aug.24,'62	Des. Sep. 17, '62.
Wessels, Louis	Suffield,	Aug.13,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Disc. dis. Jan. 8, '63.
Wessels, Helmuth	Suffield,	Aug.13,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Disc. dis. Jan. 8, '63.
Wilbraham, James	Enfield,	Aug.13,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. dis. Feb. 11, '64.
Woodworth, Chester W	Suffield,	Aug. 4,'62	Aug.24,'62	Disc. dis. Dec. 7, '62. [6th C. V. June 22, '65.
Woods, William	Hartford,	Mch.12,'64	Mch.12,'64	Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. Trans. to Co. B,

Company E.

Name and Rank.	Residence.	Date of Enlistment.	Date of Muster in this organization.	Remarks.
Captains.				
Charles Babcock,	Canton,	Aug. 1,'62	Aug.24,'62	Wd. Sep. 17, '62, Antietam, Md. Resgd. Dec. 18, '62.
Charles W. Morse,	Canton,	Aug. 1,'62	Aug.24,'62	(See 1st Lt. Co. B, 2d C. V.) Must. 1st Lt. Pro. Dec. 18, '62. Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. M. o. June 24,'65.
1st Lieutenant.				
✱ Alonzo G. Case,	Simsbury,	Aug. 7,'62	Aug.24,'62	Must. 1st Sergt. Pro. 2d Lt. Jan. 18, '63; 1st Lt. May 22, '63. Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. Disc. May 15, '65.
2d Lieutenants.				
James C. Emmons,	Hartford,	Aug. 1,'62	Aug.24,'62	Resgd. Dec. 28, '62.
Thomas R. Worsley,	Meriden,	July 20,'63	Dec. 19,'63	(See Leader 5th C. V. Band.) Pro. from Leader Harland's Brig. Band Dec. 19, '63. M. o. June 24, '65.
1st Sergeants.				
William H. Cone,	Canton,	July 22,'62	Aug.24,'62	Must. Sergt. Pro. Jan. 15, '63; 1st Lt. Co. G, Feb. 10, '63.
Richard H. Lee,	Granby,	July 29,'62	Aug.24,'62	Must. Sergt. Pro. May 4, '63. Cap'd Apr. 20,'64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. Disc. June 15, '65.
Sergeants.				
Bower, John	Canton,	July 22,'62	Aug.24,'62	Must. Priv. Pro. Corp. Dec. 25, '62; Sergt. May 23, '63. Redc. to ranks Dec. 12, '63. Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Died Aug.
✱ Case, Ariel J.	Hartford,	Aug. 5,'62	Aug.24,'62	Pro. 2d Lt. Co. H, July 1, '63. [11, '64, Andersonville, Ga.
Crossley, Thomas	Simsbury,	Aug. 7,'62	Aug.24,'62	Must. Corp. Pro. Mch. 4, '63. Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. M. o. June 24, '65.
Goodwin, Frank	New Hartford,	July 18,'62	Aug.24,'62	(See Musc. Co. B, 2d C. V.) Must. Corp. Pro. Jan. 15, '63. Redc. to ranks (sick) Feb. 18, '64. Died May 25, '64.
Good, John H.	Canton,	July 22,'62	Aug.24,'62	Must. Corp. Redc. to ranks Jan. 30, '63. Pro. Sergt. Mch. 4, '63. Redc. to ranks May 7, '63. M. o. June 24, '65.
Holcomb, Gavett B.	Simsbury,	Aug. 9,'62	Aug.24,'62	Must. Priv. Pro. Sergt. Feb. 13, '64. Cap'd Apr. 20, '64, Plymouth, N. C. Par. Feb. 28, '65. M. o. June 24, '65.

CASE, Alonzo G.; 1st. Lt., Company E; Residence, Simsbury, Connecticut; Enlisted August 7, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Captured at Plymouth. NC, April 20, 1864; Paroled February 28, 1865; Discharged May 15, 1865. Alonzo 4/20/64 – 2/28/65 10 Mos and 10 Days

CASE, Ariel J.; 2nd. Lt., Company H; Residence, Hartford, Connecticut; Enlisted August 5, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Mustered out June 24, 1865.

CASE, Charles H.; Private, Company E; Residence, Canton, Connecticut; Enlisted July 22, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Captured at Plymouth, NC, April 20, 1864; Paroled February 28, 1865; Mustered out June 24, 1865.

CASE, Hosea E.; Private, Company E; Residence, Simsbury, Connecticut; Enlisted August 8, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Died December 1, 1863.

CASE, John E.; Private, Company E; Residence, Simsbury, Connecticut; Enlisted August 6, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Wounded, Antietam, MD, September 17, 1862; Discharged with disability, October 16, 1863.

CASE, Lowell M.; Private, Company G; Residence, Hartford, Connecticut; Enlisted August 21, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Died February 2, 1863.

CASE, Lucien F.; Private, Company I; Residence, Stafford, Connecticut; Enlisted August 7, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Captured at Plymouth, NC, April 20, 1864; Paroled December 10, 1864; Mustered out June 24, 1865.

CASE, Orville J.; Private, Company A; Residence, New Hartford, Connecticut; Enlisted August 7, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Died October 12, 1862.

CASE, William W.; Private, Company B; Residence, Hartford, Connecticut; Enlisted August 11, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Mustered out June 24, 1865.

CASE, W. Chester; Private, Company H; Residence, Bloomfield, Connecticut; Enlisted August 25, 1862; Mustered August 25, 1862; Discharged with disability, June 16, 1865.

BACON, Francis H.; Private, Company F; Residence, Hartford, Connecticut; Enlisted July 18, 1862; Mustered August 24, 1862; Dishonorably Discharged by sentence of General Courts Martial, January 25, 1864.

Fig. E. 16th Connecticut Infantry monument

Antietam Creek in rear of picture. Image from U.S. National Park Service; http://www.nps.gov/anti/historyculture/mnt-ct-16.htm; Internet; accessed 10 January 2007.

VI. Sixteenth Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry

The 16th Connecticut was mustered into Federal service on 24 August 1862 one day after the 14th was mustered in. At an inspection on 28 August during which several men fainted due to the heat, many realized that the equipment they proposed to carry was not realistic and so commenced the reduction in the size of accoutrements which all new recruits undergo, including steel vests.[66] The regiment, 1,010 strong, boarded steamers and left for New York City where they boarded another boat bound for Elizabeth, New Jersey. They finally arrived in Washington, D.C., by train on 29 August and went into camp on Arlington Heights. After being moved to Fort Ward spending the first night in the rain without tents, they spent a few days in camp still without their tents but fortunately without precipitation. Like the 14th Connecticut before them, the men marveled at the new sights they saw in the capitol—the swarms of African-Americans, the squalor of much of the city, and the thousands of soldiers and civilians that the war effort had brought there. Like all new regiments most of the men were visiting the city for the first time, and they also were undertaking martial affairs as a new vocation, so

their wonderment is understandable.[67]

They then packed up for their march west beginning on 7 September to catch up with the rest of their 2nd Brigade which had preceded them by a few days. In light marching order, they proceeded during the next few days to travel through Maryland camping near Leesboro, Brookville, Mount Lebanon, New Market, and then Frederick where, arriving on 14 September, they camped outside of town. The nights in camp after long marches were made more enjoyable since, even as new troops, they quickly learned that foraging would be needed to supplement meager or missing rations.[68] They, like other Union troops who marched through Frederick, also enjoyed the warm greetings they received from its citizens. Again, like the other green regiment, the 14th, they gazed in shock at the destruction that the fighting the days before their arrival had caused: Confederate dead were still unburied as were dead animals; destroyed civilian and military property lined the roads.[69]

On 15 September, the 16th marched west on the National Road still trying to catch up with the rest of their brigade; it camped at the foot of South Mountain near Turner's Gap where Union soldiers fought the Battle of South Mountain the day before successfully pushing Lee's troops off to the west. On 16 September, they marched through the battlefield and continued over the mountain through Boonsboro to the west of Turner's Gap then south to Keedysville where it rested before continuing on to end a very long day of marching by joining its brigade near Antietam Creek. As they passed their fellow "fresh fish" in the 14th Connecticut who had left Hartford a few days before the 16th, they gave the newcomers a hearty greeting as their regimental commander, Col. Francis Beach, reported in to the brigade commander, Colonel Harland.[70] They had averaged about fifteen miles a day of hot, dusty marching, a grueling introduction to army life, leaving many stragglers in its wake. After seeing the devastation on its march west from Frederick and over South Mountain, the men had to know that their turn would soon come. And those who contemplated their baptism of fire very likely reflected on their entire lack of training and little knowledge of martial ways, and found little sleep that rainy night. Tomorrow would be their twenty-fifth day since being sworn into Federal service, and by the end of that first day of battle, 223 of those restless sleepers men would fall.[71]

The 16th's introduction to battle the next morning came early as Confederate batteries fired on the brigade causing it to be moved to a more sheltered location closer to Antietam Creek; this movement resulted in several men being wounded as it had to maneuver in sight of the enemy.[72] The brigade was able to take cover closer to the creek behind some low hills out of direct sight of the hill on which the Confederates were dug in on the west side of the creek. The regiment, following the 8th, then continued to move to the left endeavoring to flank the Confederates at the Lower Bridge; they forded at Snavely's Ford, about shoulder high for some at 1 P.M., then moved to the north climbing an incline. They then halted awaiting the report from a company which was sent ahead to scout the area. As that company returned, the Confederates, some of whom were those who had retreated from the Union assault at the bridge, noticed the regiment and it came under artillery fire. A Union battery was brought up and the regiment supported it as it silenced the Confederate guns. The ominous message from the Federal signal station on Elk Mountain signaled the doom of Harland's brigade and all of the other units heading for the town of Sharpsburg: "To General Burnside: Look out well on your left; the enemy are moving a strong force in that direction."[73] Colonel Beach had sent his noisy, unruly 16th ahead of the battery forming a line northwest with the 4th Rhode Island on its right in the middle of a cornfield. The 8th Connecticut was already ahead of the two regiments on their right. Colonel Harland had ordered the whole brigade to move up to maintain contact with Colonel Fairchild's to the right but the 16th and 4th Rhode Island did not hear the order. Just then, Confederate infantry appeared on the 16th's front and left flank.[74] They were confronting veteran South Carolina regiments in Maxcy Gregg's brigade to their front and left flank. The large size of the Connecticut unit, some 700 to 900 strong, probably impressed the South Carolinians especially compared to their decimated units: many had been left along the route of their difficult forced march up from Harper's Ferry. Some of the South Carolina units were behind a stone wall to the Nutmegger's front.[75]

Colonel Beach tried to refuse the left companies to meet this threat planning to have the 4th Rhode Island, still to his left rear, conform to this alignment and extend the left flank which was in the air. Unfortunately, the green officers and men did not understand the orders even if they could hear the Colonel's commands. The regiment was ordered to fix bayonets but most participants did not believe that this was given preparatory to making a charge, but rather perhaps to repel one.[76] In addition, the 4th Rhode Island was firing into the 8th and if that was not confusing enough, many of the South Carolinians to their front and left flank were wearing Union blue. Apparently many of the Confederate units which had just come up from

Harper's Ferry had taken advantage of the new uniforms worn by surrendered Union forces there. Thus, it appeared to the shaken 16th than they were being attacked from three sides at once and by Union soldiers. Even veteran troops likely would have panicked in this situation so it is not surprising that these green troops broke for the rear. Depending on who told the story of the ensuing scene, the troops were "[b]roken and shattered[;] the regiment... [left] the field by routes of our own choosing."[77] The 4th Rhode Island accused the Connecticut troops of breaking leading to the 4th's retreat while the 16th said that "the 4th Rhode Island broke to the rear and plunged through [our]... moving companies."[78]

The 223 men lost in the 16th were the highest of the Connecticut units at Antietam reflecting the ferocity of the fire in the cornfield and the inexperience of the unit.[79] The large number also was obviously due to the large size of the new regiment even though it was not up to full strength since stragglers from its forced marches continued to arrive the next day.[80] Needless to say, having untested regiments at a crucial point on the Union line was a critical failure of the Union high command. Had not the Southern commanders on the scene halted attacks late that day, it is possible that the 9th Corps could have been pushed back across the Antietam with even heavier losses.[81] The 16th's inexperience under fire is clearly shown in comparing the casualties of the two South Carolina regiments who fought the Nutmeggers: the South Carolina regiments "had very likely inflicted casualties of eight or nine to one in their engagement with the 16th."[82] The regiment stayed the next day on the field and then camped near Antietam Furnace on the Harper's Ferry Road.

The monument to the 16th is located about one-half mile to the east of Harper's Ferry Road and 700 yards southeast of the 8th Connecticut's monument. This tall, obelisk-shaped monument, is unlike the other three regiments' as it is made up of many pieces of variegated colored stone vice monochromatic large blocks. The monument states that it was erected at the position of the regiment at 5 P.M. and that the regiment sustained 204 killed and wounded out of 779 engaged, a 26 percent loss. The regiment's luck continued to be bad as it never had a chance to exact revenge for Antietam. It saw sporadic fighting until April 1864 when most of it was captured at Plymouth, North Carolina; transported to the infamous Andersonville, Georgia, prison camp, two hundred died. While soon after the battle, some participants recorded the panic and poor performance of the unit, Connecticut newspapers and other veterans then and later glossed over their failures and emphasized the positive aspects of which there were few. The 16th was the "bad luck" regiment at Antietam and for the duration of the war.[84]

Table of Connecticut Regimental Losses during the Maryland Campaign*

Regiment	Killed		Wounded		Captured of Missing		Aggregate
	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted	
Eighth	1	33	10	129	0	21	194
Eleventh	2	34	1	102	0	0	139
Fourteenth	2	18	3	85	0	48	156
Sixteenth	4	38	9	134	0	0	185
Totals	9	123	23	450	0	69	674

*Data from *OR,* pt. 1, 193, 197.

The data clearly show the plight of the veteran 8th which was almost surrounded so lost most heavily. That its officers desperately tried to hold the unit together is demonstrated as 10 were wounded in the attempt. The 11th's smaller losses reflect that after their suicidal attempt at Burnside Bridge, they were little involved. The 14th which fortunately found cover and did not closely assault Bloody Lane suffered fewer killed and wounded than their green counterpart, the 16th. The 16th which was heavily involved lost the most in killed and wounded during their precipitous retreat having none captured. This green regiment also lost the most officers killed as they were caught as surprised and unprepared as their men.

Because the number of men actually brought to the firing line cannot be accurately determined the percent of loss for each regiment of men involved is not presented here. Such numbers as can be estimated are noted in the discussions for each regiment.

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CT.HTM
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File: 16-

New: 1998
Rev: 6-15-

2003

Connecticut 16th Regiment Graves

Notes:

POW deaths are almost all interred at such prison sites as: Andersonville, GA, Charleston and Florence, SC and Wilmington, NC.

Antietam casualties were mostly interred on the battlefield. Included are names whose dates of death/interment cannot be verified.

Some fatalites at the West Cemetery in Bristol are inscribed on a memorial, rather than on actual interments. (WBristl)

M/O = Mustered Out...(date follows)
CdrHill-Hfd = Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford
NewBernNC-NC = National Cemetery, Newbern, North Carolina
SpGrv-Darien = Spring Grove Cemetery, Darien
SprGrv-Hfd = Spring Grove Cemetery, Hartford
TogusNatCem-ME = National Cemetery, Togus, Maine (near Agusta)
LamC-Burl = Lamson Corners Cem., Burlington

A BLOODY HISTORY

The Sixteenth was indeed a hard-luck regiment from its inception. Mustered into Federal Service on August 24, 1862, it was still virtually untrained when thrown into combat at Antietam three weeks later and had its ranks decimated. Further horrific casualties followed at Bloody Fredericksburg in December.

After a "relatively quiet" 1863, the following spring found it as a part of the Union garrison at Plymouth, North Carolina. An unexpected and
massive Confederate assault resulted in a capitulation on April 20, 1864.
In captivity, its ranks were further thinned through disease and outright starvation at Georgia's dreaded Andersonville, with prisons at Florence and Charleston, South Carolina also exacting their tolls.

As a tragic footnote, several survivors were drowned in the sinking of the steamer "Black Diamond" on the Potomac on April 24, 1865, with the Civil War now essentially over, with the martyred Lincoln's body lying in state in New York City.

Roster by Name

Name	Unit	Home	Date & place of death, Cemetery
Case, Ariel J. 2-Lt.	Co. H, 16th CVI	Hrtfrd	M/O June 24, 1865.
Case, Hosea E.	Co. E, 16th CVI	Smsbry	Dec 1, 1863 HamptonNatCem-VA
Case, Lowell M.	Co. G, 16th CVI	Hrtfrd	Feb 2, 1863
Case, Orville J.	Co. A, 16th CVI	NHfrd	Oct 12, 1862

Marker 1118

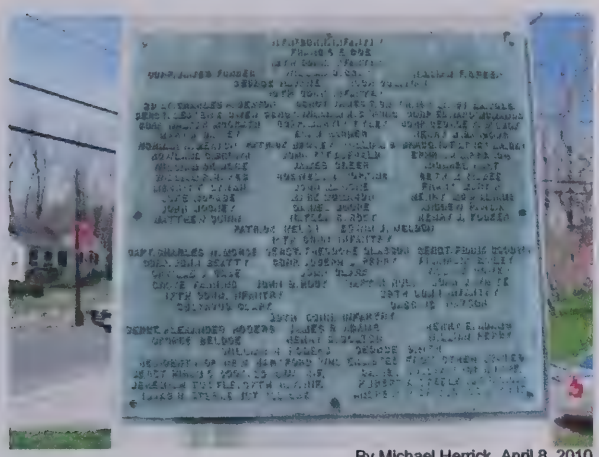
O. J. Case

Conn.

Buried in Section 16

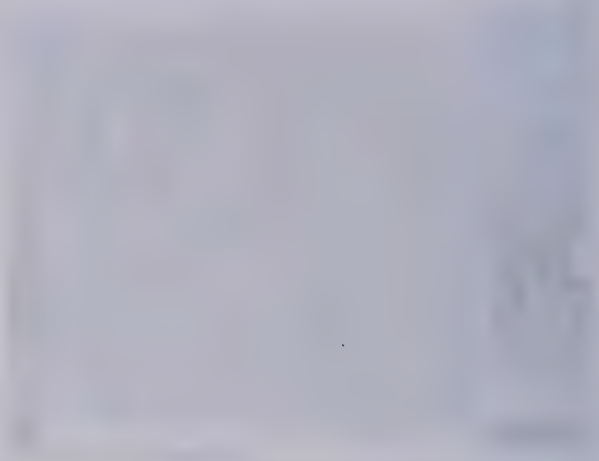
16th Conn. Infantry

Capt. Charles W. Morse • Sergt. Theodore Glasson • Sergt. Frank Goodwin • Corp. John Beatty • Corp. Joseph L. Perry • Franklin Bailey • Orville J. Case • John Clark • William Cowen • Grove Fanning • John B. Hook • Martin Hull • John J. White



By Michael Herrick, April 8, 2010

2. New Hartford Soldiers Memorial
east side



Apr 17, 1864:

Battle of Plymouth, North Carolina, begins

Confederate forces attack Plymouth, North Carolina, in an attempt to recapture ports lost to the Union two years before. The four-day battle ended with the fall of Plymouth, but the Yankees kept the city bottled up with a flotilla on nearby Albemarle Sound.

In 1862, the Union captured Plymouth and several other points along the North Carolina coast. In doing so, they deprived the Confederacy of several ports for blockade-runners and the agricultural products from several fertile counties. In the spring of 1864, the Confederates mounted a campaign to reverse these defeats. General George Pickett led a division to the area and launched a failed attack on New Bern in February. Now, General Robert Hoke assumed command and moved his army against Plymouth, fifty miles north of New Bern. He planned an attack using the C.S.S. *Albemarle,* an ironclad that was still being built on the Roanoke River inland from Plymouth.

With 7,000 men, Hoke attacked the 2,800-man Union garrison at Plymouth on April 17. His troops began to capture some of the outer defenses, but he needed the *Albemarle* to bomb the city from the river. The ironclad moved from its makeshift shipyard on April 17, but it was still under construction. With workers aboard, Captain James Cooke moved down the Roanoke. The *Albemarle*'s rudder broke and the engine stalled, so it took two days to reach Plymouth. When it arrived, the Rebel ship took on two Yankee ships, sinking one and forcing the other to retreat. With the ironclad on the scene, Hoke's men captured Plymouth on April 20.

The Confederates lost 163 men killed and 554 wounded, but captured the entire Union garrison and vast amounts of supplies and arms. The Union lost about 150 killed and wounded, while several hundred of the captured soldiers eventually died at the notorious Andersonville Prison in Georgia. The Rebel victory was limited by the fact that the *Albemarle* was still pinned in the Roanoke River. The crew tried to fight past a Union flotilla on Albemarle Sound on May 5, but it could not escape. It was destroyed in a Union raid on Plymouth on October 27, 1864. Yankee troops recaptured the city four days later.

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Fact Check *We strive for accuracy and fairness. But if you see something that doesn't look right,* ***contact us!***

April 17

{EXCERPT}

Bad Luck Regiment

For one contingent of Connecticut's loyal sons, the war seemed to bring one disaster after another

By Lesley J. Gordon

Three officers of the 16th Connecticut: Lieutenant Alonzo Case, left, and Lieutenant Wallace Andrus, center, were captured at Plymouth, N.C., in April 1864. Captain Henry Beach, right, was wounded at Antietam.

The 16th Connecticut Infantry, raised in the late summer of 1862, was one of the Union Army's particularly ill-fated units. The regiment fought at the Battle of Antietam when it was wholly unprepared for combat, with predictably catastrophic results. Then, on April 16, 1864, after a year and a half largely in garrison duty on the coasts of Virginia and North Carolina, the 16th was captured en masse at the Battle of Plymouth, N.C. Most of the men would spend months in the notorious Andersonville prison, where disease and starvation took a deadly toll. The horrors of those two disasters haunted the survivors until their final days.

THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

On September 17, Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan confronted Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, which had invaded Maryland with hopes of replenishing its troops as well as turning the tide of the Civil War. The resulting battle was the bloodiest single day of the entire war. Early that morning, Privates Ira Forbes and Robert Kellogg awoke to read the Bible and pray. Orders swiftly came to "fall in," and fighting began at dawn. Confederate batteries began shelling their position. As Corporal Samuel B. Mettler, of Company C, described: "[W]e were lying under a hill, but their shot came so fast and so sure that we were obliged to run to the woods for protection—many falling from the enemy's shots as they ran." To Private Marx Neisener, of Company G, the artillery fire "came like rain—round shot, shells, shrapnel, grape and all. The regiment fell flat and the shot went over them." At least an hour went by, and then the regiment moved to a cornfield to wait for two more hours.

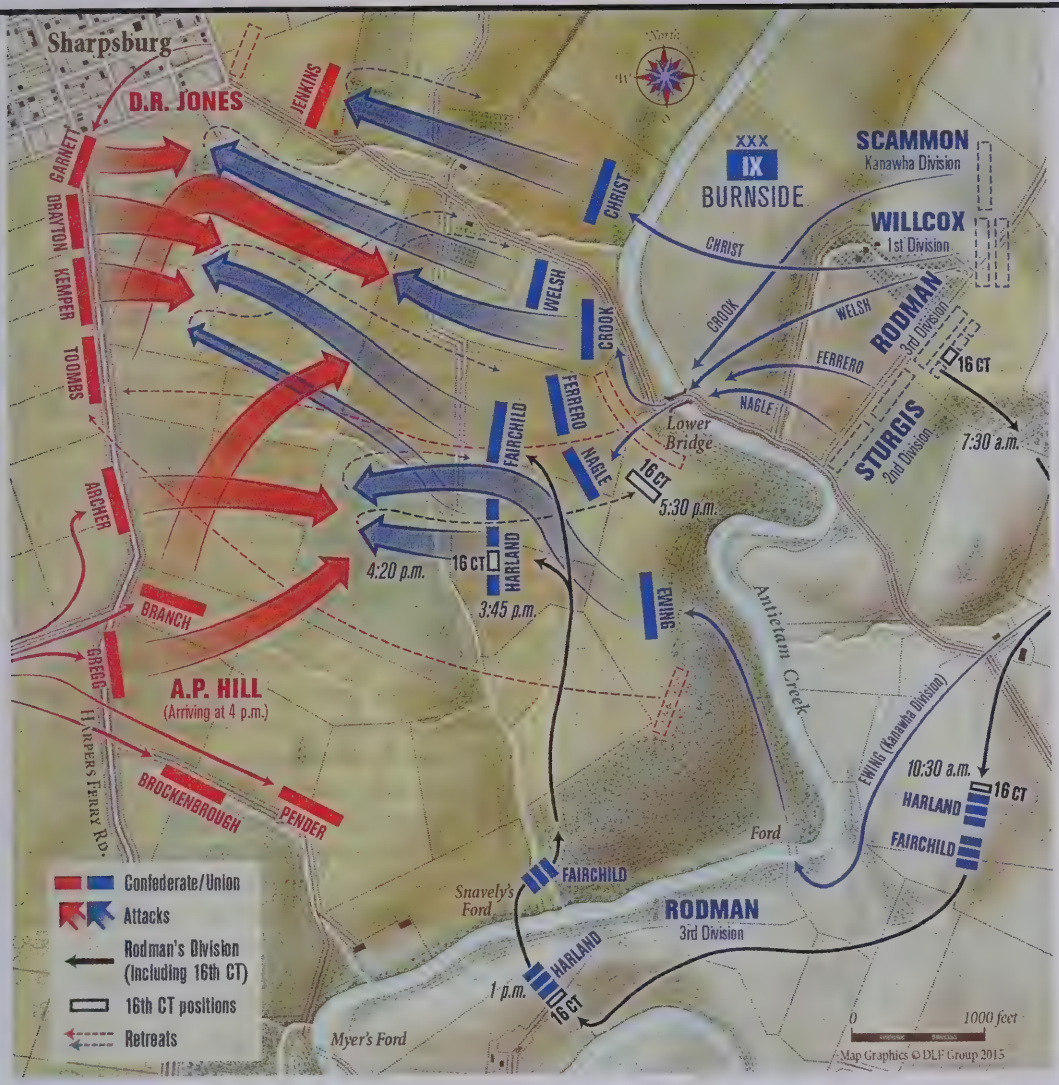
Few of the 16th Connecticut's green troops were ready for what they would face at Antietam

The Battle of Antietam had commenced, and the noise of the shot and shell grew so loud that men had to shout to talk. "We had," Private George Robbins recalled, "a magnificent view of the long battlefield stretching away to our right along the undulating country as far as the eye could see, with masses of blue clad soldiers showing for a few moments, then out of sight as the hills hid them from view." The early morning shock of being fired upon by enemy artillery had made it abundantly clear that the regiment was about to go into battle. Exactly when and where they would engage, however, remained a mystery. The waiting only seemed to make things worse. As the hours slipped away, a few restless souls wandered off to pick peaches. Others had already been directly touched by fire. Kellogg had received a slight wound in the arm, a shell fragment had cut out Chaplain Peter Finch's coat pocket, and surgeon Abner Warner's horse had been shot out from under him.

The battle's frightening sounds and sights made some feel faint and weak, and when noon sick call came, they vanished to the rear. Private George N. Lamphere explained: "The fact is well known to all soldiers that one of the most trying positions troops can be put into is to be lying around inactive and yet be under fire. It requires courage and it is a great consumer of nerve power."

Sergeant William Relyea scornfully recalled that many of those suddenly "sick" just before battle were the loudest braggarts, who had vowed they would kill the regiment's widely disliked colonel, Francis Beach. "Rid of regimental rubbish," Relyea alleged, the 16th was then "free from everything that would or could tarnish our good name clear of all weakening influences now ready for the ordeal that awaited us."

Few in the 16th Connecticut, however, were ready for what they would soon face. By late afternoon, the 16th was sent south to try to outflank the Confederates and find a crossable ford on Antietam Creek. The men crossed the creek about a mile below Burnside Bridge, holding their guns and cartridge boxes high over their



The 16th, along with the 4th Rhode Island, was in the van of the Union advance when Maj. Gen. A.P. Hill's counterattack hammered the Nutmegs and sent them streaming for the rear.

heads. Some later contended that the water was shoulder deep. After hurrying up the side of a hill to support a Union battery, officers ordered the men to hit the ground immediately. Rebel cannons took deadly aim on their position, pounding them with grape, canister and railroad iron. The hill's crest protected most of the unit, but the artillery fire injured about a dozen of the men. A few privates joked nervously, seeking to break the thickening tension. Colonel Beach barked impatiently at the jokesters, silencing any attempts at levity.

Between 3:30 and 4 p.m., the brigade's commander Colonel Edward Harland waited with increasing impatience for the 16th Connecticut and the 4th Rhode Island to advance. The 8th Connecticut had already moved forward some distance to the right of the regiments, creating a gap between units. Harland sent an aide to push the remainder of his brigade forward, and Brig. Gen. Isaac P. Rodman intervened personally to hasten the men along. Rodman discovered the 16th Connecticut still on the ground, near the edge of a cornfield, and as he began to converse intently with Colonel Beach, he spotted enemy movement to the left of the cornfield. Rodman rushed back to find the 4th Rhode Island while Beach quickly ordered the regiment into formation. Because the color-bearer forgot to take the flag out of its dark glazed bag, however, the regiment entered its first battle essentially waving a black flag. It was an eerie premonition of what was to come.

"Attention," Beach bellowed from atop his white horse, riding up and down the lines, trying frantically to shift half of the regiment to refuse its left in order to protect its exposed flank. A wave of bullets suddenly whizzed through the ranks. As Kellogg recalled, it was "one of the most terrific volleys of musketry that I think was ever poured into a Regt." "Our men," he wrote, "fell on every side." Maneuvering sol-

Private George Robbins went to war against his parents' wishes when he was 17. This image is from 1863.

John Burnham served as the 16th's adjutant at Antietam, then became the regiment's lieutenant colonel.

Robert Kellogg was a sergeant major, the regiment's highest-ranking enlisted man, by the time he was captured at Plymouth. He survived Andersonville's hardships.

diers under fire is difficult for any officer to complete, but directing an undrilled and undisciplined regiment such as the 16th Connecticut was nearly impossible. The line officers were just as green and confused as the privates. One officer cried out in desperation, "Tell us what you want us to do and we'll try to obey you." "I want my men to face the enemy," Beach replied.

The tall, uneven corn stalks compounded the chaos; men could only see a small portion of their line at a time. A few fell out of formation, losing track of their companies. Nearing a wooden fence, officers issued conflicting orders: "Tear the fence down," and "Never mind the fence."

Only a few minutes had passed, but it seemed like an eternity. As the officers struggled to find some order and direction, Confederate troops unleashed a deadly crossfire. "So dense was the corn," wrote South Carolinian James F.J. Caldwell, "that the lines sometimes approached within thirty to forty yards of each other before [firing]." Another South Carolinian, Berry Benson, recalled running through the corn, shooting a "galling fire into the fleeing foe." Benson saw bunches of frightened bluecoats crowded into a small hollow at the bottom of the hill, afraid to cross the open slope behind them. "Grouped here in a crouching disorderly line," he remembered, "we poured into them volley after volley, doubtless with terrible execution."

Other Federals huddled behind a stone fence, sporadically breaking away, in small groups and individually, and fleeing to the rear. Some members of the regiment recalled firing only one round, and others alleged an actual charge was made. At least one soldier later recounted hearing the "hideous rebel yell." Others remembered hearing orders to "fall back," but it remains unclear whether there was ever any official call to retreat. No matter, the 16th Connecticut broke and fled in wild panic. The 4th Rhode Island, which had come up on the 16th's left, held out a little longer before it too retreated in confusion.

Caught up in the swarm of panicked soldiers, Beach stubbornly fought to regain control. He attempted to rally a small remnant of his regiment with portions of the 11th Connecticut and redraw a battle line. But little could be done. Most in the 16th Connecticut's ranks were dead, wounded or absent from the field. Dropping from mental and physical exhaustion, stragglers slept the night of September 17 under fences, on rocks and in thickets. Many wounded remained on the field all night into the next day.

Exactly 19 months later, the 16th Connecticut faced its second major engagement of the war, and this time things seemed entirely different. The men were more experienced and hardened, less idealistic about war. But they were no more prepared for a Confederate onslaught than they were on that fateful day in Maryland. And the results, like at Antietam, were devastating. Rather than panicking and fleeing from the field, however, the regiment—and the entire Federal garrison—was surrounded and captured.

THE BATTLE OF PLYMOUTH

It was a "beautiful Sabbath morning," Sunday, April 17, 1864, remembered musician Robert Holmes, and the men of the 16th Connecticut Infantry went through their regular routine without any indication of what lay ahead. Sergeant Oliver Gates recalled how, that morning, "our regiment lay in camp at Plymouth, N.C. and none of us expected an Attack, but ere the day closed we were surrounded by twelve thousand Confederate Soldiers and Gen. [Robert] Hoke." At noon, Union cavalry reported seeing the enemy just a few miles away. Private Robbins wrote in his diary that it had been a "bright pleasant day, but the Sabbath has been desecrated by the Rebels." About 5 p.m., the 16th Connecticut had just marched onto the parade ground for dress parade when a courier rushed into camp reporting an enemy attack. Private Lamphere was among the skirmishers ordered to make a reconnaissance. "We went out," Lamphere recalled, "in a front, across the esplanade to the edge of the timber, and a little beyond came upon the enemy in force. They pressed upon us and compelled us to fall back. We held out stubbornly, dodging behind stumps and logs and firing at the enemy all the way to our line of works." Within a few hours all the skirmishers had returned to camp, and the Rebel attack was in full force. General Hoke was at the head of a combined land and naval operation that outnumbered the Federals nearly 4-to-1.

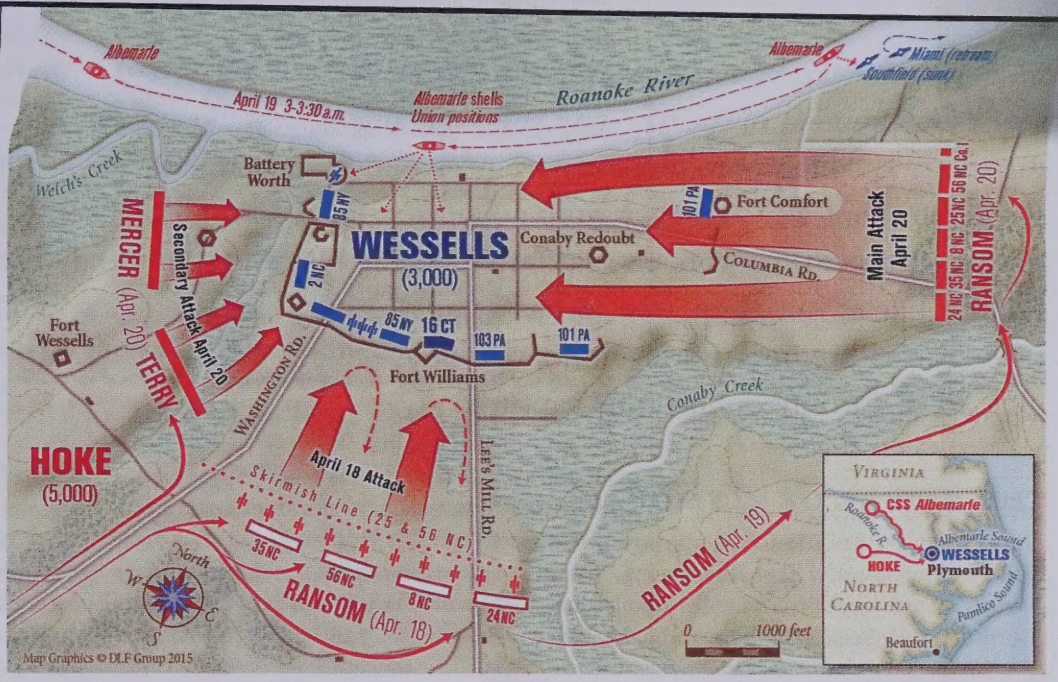
The 16th Connecticut, totaling about 400 men, manned Fort Williams at the center of the Union breastworks. "Our position," Robbins noted, "was on the west bank of the Roanoke [R]iver about eight miles from its mouth, protected by log breast-works from the attack of the enemy, running from the river in a circular form and encompassing the small town to a point some two-thirds of a semi-circle, leaving the space to the river on the south protected by light gunboats of which three were anchored abreast the town." Kellogg wrote a short letter to his father at 8 p.m., a few hours after the assault began: "We are having an interesting time of it." He urged his father to be firm in their Christian faith: "Don't be anxious on my account—God will keep me. Trust him." Leland Barlow also scribbled a quick note to his sister that evening: "The Rebs showed themselves about 5 PM and we are having a right smart artillery fight." "Never fear," he hastily closed.

Lamphere recalled that he and his comrades were confident at first, since they were on high ground and their works were defended by "good 12 pound brass howitzers" and an "abundance of ammunition." "The troops," he wrote, "were in good spirits; in fact we were in a state of the highest enthusiasm, as we were to fight behind breastworks, and we felt that we could whip four or five times our number, and we could and did for two days." A swamp lay before them, "about 900 yards wide" with felled logs "sprawling in all directions over the miry and boggy ground."

The Confederate operation outnumbered the Federals nearly 4-to-1

The Confederate assault, however, was unrelenting. By 11 p.m., Company H of the 16th Connecticut was ordered to escort "all loyal" women, children, and other noncombatants aboard the steamer *Massasoit*, which was headed for Roanoke Island. Private Forbes bitterly complained in his diary that the Confederates attacked without first allowing "the non-combatants to leave, and have thereby violated one of the principles of civilized warfare." Meanwhile, Confederate artillery con-

Pounded by *Rebel attacks* on their front *and flanks and* bombarded by *Albemarle* to their rear, the 16th had few options at Plymouth except to sit there and take it.



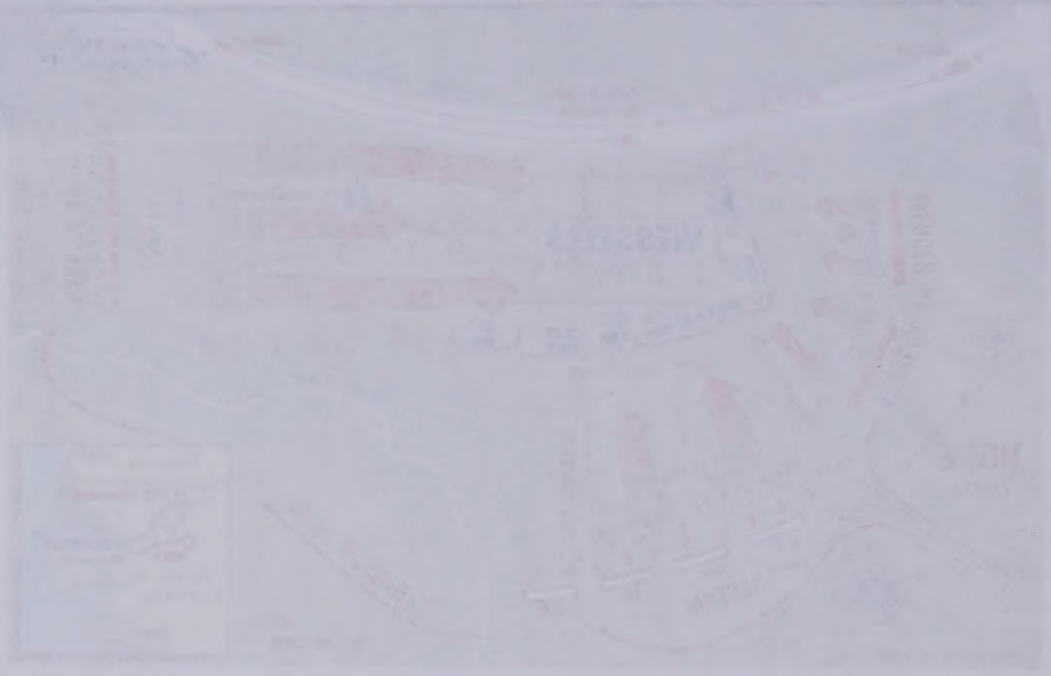
tinued blasting away until nearly midnight and then resumed firing just before sunrise the next morning. Soon Rebel soldiers began pouring out of the woods and overpowered the Union skirmish lines, forcing the Federals to retreat inside their forts. Following a "sharp engagement" between a Rebel battery and the men in Fort Wessells on the Union right, there was a short respite. Then around 3 p.m., Forbes wrote, "the enemy moved forward in line of battle on the Washington Road." This movement was checked, but the Confederates advanced again, driving "our pickets and skirmishers, and opened on us from a battery which they had succeeded in planting in a fine position." For about three hours, the Confederate guns blasted away at Fort Williams until they were finally "silenced, and our picket line was again established." Forbes judged that there was "splendid shooting on both sides," with the Federals taking relatively "slight" casualties.

Confederate artillery and gunboats unleashed a withering fire that did not stop until 10 p.m. At one point, a battery planted itself directly in front of the regiment's position and, according to Kellogg, "blazed away with the greatest rapidity upon our camp and Fort Williams." Sergeant Samuel Grosvenor wrote it was "one of the most furious cannonades" he had ever witnessed.

Under the blizzard of fire, men began to falter and struggled to keep their composure. Lt. Col. John Burnham attempted to soothe the regiment's nerves by ordering the band to play "National airs." At first this seemed to work. Kellogg later remembered, "Brave hearts became braver, and if the patriotism of any waxed cold, and the courage of any faltered, they here grew warmer and stronger until the pride of country had touched the will, and an indomitable principle had been kindled that virtually declared the man a hero until death." But before long Confederate artillery took aim at the musicians, and shells began to drop over their heads. At this moment, Kellogg recalled, "the musicians retired precipitately, the bass drummer throwing his sticks in one direction and his drum in another, leaving the defense of the breastworks to the boys with the rifles."

As the enemy fire persisted into the night, Kellogg sought solace in faith: "God has given me courage and calmness. I try to trust in Jesus Christ. May His will be done." Years later, Forbes gave credit to Burnham's cool conduct during the siege: "He was a man of unquestioning bravery and held his men in perfect discipline awaiting the charge."

With the siege continuing into a third day, the Federal outlook seemed bleak. "It was evident to us," Lieutenant Bernard Blakeslee later wrote, "that we must either be killed or go to 'Libby' [Prison]." Kellogg declared on April 19, "This morning finds us in a rather bad plight." Earlier, the Confederate ram *Albemarle* had slipped past the Federal guns and sunk USS *Southfield*, in the process driving off other Union gunboats and cutting off the position from outside communication. "We are surrounded," Champlin wrote in his diary.



At one point, Major Henry L. Pasco ordered Lieutenant Alonzo Case to select a group of men and hold them "in readiness to charge over the works in case the rebels came up to them in our front." Case was convinced few would return from such an extremely dangerous mission and initially offered the task to his own Company E, which consisted of about 40 men. To his surprise, every member of the company volunteered. "I was proud of that Company at that time," he wrote. "They were more brave than I. I was ordered to go, they volunteered."

Fort Wessells eventually fell, and *Albemarle* began shelling the town. "We went to work," Lamphere wrote, "throwing up earthworks to defend us from the riverside and soon had some protection." Soldiers were ordered to begin digging "for our lives, building traverses, bombproofs, etc." The men and their commanders never questioned such defensive behavior as unheroic or cowardly. It was simple survival. Firing continued into the dark, and the men had another sleepless night, anxious about what awaited them. "The 'rebs' evidently intend to take us," Grosvenor predicted bleakly.

On Wednesday morning, the 16th was ordered to provide reinforcements on the left. "In doing so," Lamphere wrote, "we had to pass through the village, and as we reached a point a little past Fort Williams, we discerned, not clearly, as it was not yet light, a black line within our defenses. We were formed in a line of battle and we marched cautiously toward it, and being sufficiently near discharged a broadside into their ranks, getting the first shot. The order was to fall back and to reload while so marching with face toward the enemy. This order was executed promptly."

Lamphere was in the process of loading his gun when "murderous musketry fire from the enemy who had advanced on the run" tore through the ranks. Hit in the left arm by a Minié ball, Lamphere dropped his rifle. Ordered to head back to a hospital tent, he later recalled: "I did reach the tent, and it did not seem to me more than ten minutes until the whole place swarmed with the enemy who came pell mell, tearing and swearing and firing without much regard to the sanctity of the hospital flag, and the tent was riddled with bullets."

Separated from the regiment, Lamphere and a few wounded comrades were captured. He never saw his unit again, moved first to the state capital of Raleigh, then to Salisbury, N.C., and then to Libby Prison in Richmond. His left arm was amputated on May 22.

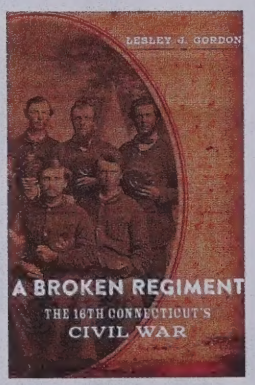
In the meantime, the Rebels pressed forward to take the town and began pounding Fort Williams from every direction. There was another flurry of fighting, and the artillery fire was "perfectly awful." As the day unfolded, the Confederates demanded surrender, according to Lieutenant Blakeslee, on three occasions in order "to save further sacrifice of life." But each time the Confederates were rebuffed. After the third offer, Hoke defiantly declared, "I will fill your citadel full of iron; I will compel your surrender, if I have to fight until the last man."

"I was now completely enveloped on every side," Brig. Gen. Henry Wessells later reported, "Fort Williams an inclosed work in the center of the line, being my only hope. This was well understood by the enemy, and in less than an hour a cannonade of shot and shell was opened upon it from four different directions. This terrible fire had to be endured without reply, as no man could live at the guns." Wessells decided that he had no more options. "This condition of affairs could not be long endured, and in compliance with the earnest desire of every officer I consented to hoist a white flag, and at 10 a.m. of April 20 I had the mortification of surrendering my post to the enemy with all it contained."

"General this is the saddest day of my life," Wessells reportedly observed to Hoke, who responded, "General Wessells, this is the proudest day of mine." Sergeant Jacob Bauer later asserted that after the surrender, a member of his Company G still had his gun and aimed to fire it at a Confederate general, who was on horseback. Another soldier stopped him. "It was good luck," Bauer maintained, "because had a Reb been killed after surrender, they would have killed us all."

Instead, the "'rebs' took us all," Grosvenor scrawled in his diary that day. Indeed, nearly the entire regiment was captured except for Company H and a scattering of men on detached service. The regiment's casualties (except for those captured) were relatively light: one killed and 12 wounded.

After the war, Kellogg concluded: "The comparatively small loss of the Sixteenth at Plymouth was by reason of its fighting behind defenses for the first time in its history. The attacking Confederate forces, fighting in the open, sustained losses so heavy that they were never reported in detail." ■



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